Music and dance traditions in Kerala temples (Part 3)

Karana

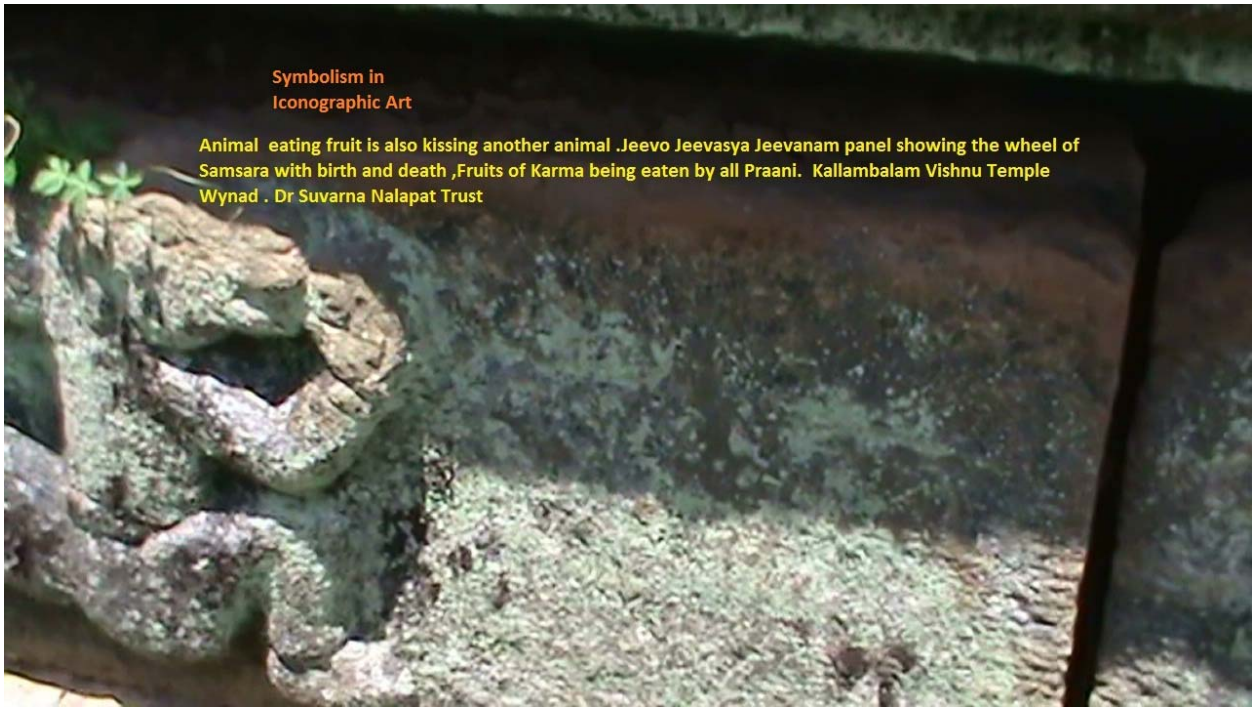
A research conducted with permission from Archeological society of India (Thrissur division),Cochin Devaswam Board ,Malabar Devaswam Board and Zamorin of Calicut .Thanks to all of them and the ooralars of the temples visited who gave informations and ground support for the field work and data collection.

Dr Suvarna Nalapat

Founder President

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust for Education and Research

This was once a koothambalam where musicians and dancers played and got awards from the emperor .Now teak trees grow on Vedi.
Panniyur
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Symbolism in
Iconographic Art
Animal eating fruit is also kissing another animal .Jeevo Jeevasya Jeevanam panel showing the wheel of Samsara with birth and death ,Fruits of Karma being eaten by all Praani. Kallambalam Vishnu Temple Wynad . Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Karanas in Natyasasthra of Bharathamuni :

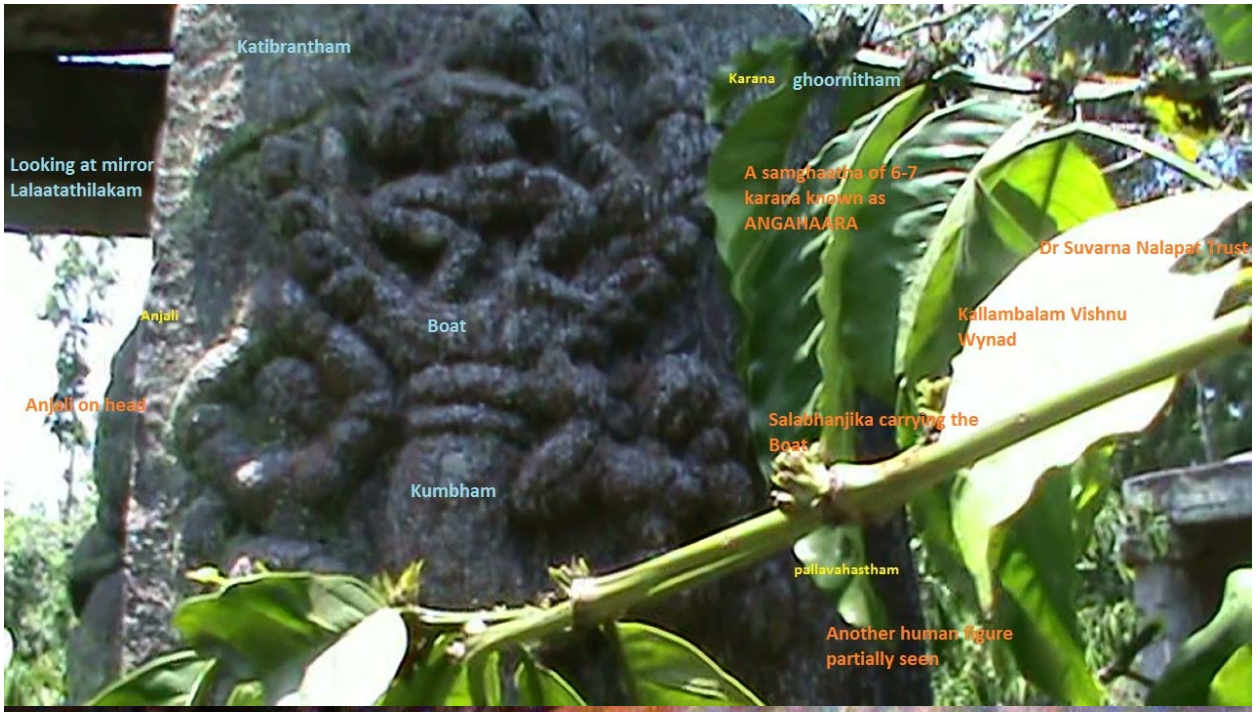
- **What is meant by Karana ?**

Hasthapaadasamaayogou Nrithasya karanam bhaveth . Karanam of Dance is formed by joined actions of hand mudra and the feet movements.When two *Nrithakarana* are combined a *Nrithamaathruka* is formed.

When 3 karana combine a *Mandakam* is formed .

When 4 karana combine a *Kaaranam* is formed .

When 6, 7 , 8 or 9 karana form a *samghaatha* (combination) it is called a *Angahaara.*


Katibrantham
Karana
ghoornitham
Looking at mirror
Lalaatathilakam
A samghaatha of 6-7
karana known as
ANGAHAARA
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Anjali
Boat
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Anjali on head
Salabhanjika carrying the
Boat
Kumbham
pallavahastham
Another human figure
partially seen

Vatakkunnaathan
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Chammanthitta pradoshanrutham shows
multiple karana .On left side smaller
figure of Devi show a single karana

32 *Angahaaraas* are listed in Natyasasthra, which are combinations of the 108 Nrithakarana . The Karana in dance performance , therefore , is a combination of several *Nrithamaathrukas*.

For enhancement of aesthetic beauty , a *Geetham* is used in dance and drama . Therefore the name for Vocal music /*Geethakam* is *Vardhamaanakam*. (That which enhance beauty, aesthetic effect of art). The increase in letters /*Akshara* (language) increase *Layam* (ecstastic oneness with art/God),says Bharathamuni .

A *geetham* starts and ends.But , all such *geethas* have origin in an everpresent eternal *vardhamaanaka Laya*, and that is *Mahaageetha* .(The Vardhamaana, is Vriddhaswara in Saamaveda.That was my Vridhachala dream experience , a predictive dream for me in childhood) .If *Geetha* is *Jevathman*,*Mahaageetha* is *Paramaathman*. If *Geetha* is *Vyaktha* , *Mahaageetha* is *Avyaktha.All Geetha have to go back to that Mahaageetha/Avyaktha/Brahman. Therefore Mahaageetha is the Mouna (silence) from which all Geetha originate.*

Yad Geethakam vardhamaanakam cha anaadiroopam mahaageetham .

In Temple rites the use of *Geetha* and *Nritha* with 32 *Angahaaraas* (which include all 108 karana) was done for *Devathaapreethi* as *Navasandhikavuthuvam* . During performance of *Bhoothabali* this was done by *Devadasi*/dancing girls in ritualistic manner. In Tamil Nad temples Dr Padma Subramanyam had done detailed research on Karana , and found that in *Vridhachalam* only 72 karana are seen while in others (Thanjavur) 108 are seen. In the book *Thillai Nataraja*, Sri B.Natarajan has given 93 of these karanas carved on stone in Thillai and accompanying Bharathamuni"s slokas . My attempt was to found out how many of these exist in Malabar Temples. Malabar is chosen because , the ancient temples in Malabar (before imperial Chola period) had been performing centers of *Devadasis* and matrilinear system of India .I had grown up in Vannery, as granddaughter of a Thalappally swaroopam Raja, and from visits to the many temples in Thalappally areas I had imbibed a taste for the Iconographic styles, temple traditions of Kerala. The Vasantholsava /Chandrolsava panels of some of the temples there are more ancient than the ones we see in Tamil Nad. Chandrolsava , an ancient Manipravala krithi written by an Avanoor King (of Thalappilli) bears testimony to this. And Avanoor was a part of my grandfather's (Chittanjoor Kunjunni Raja) territory .

Palazhimathanam panel. Note elephant with Thidamb and procession of people carrying various instruments

In Chandrolsava we find that Devadasi of temples had the same position and respect as she had in Sangam Period (Chilappathikaram.Madhavi had a respectable position in Chola king's court) and during later Imperial Chola period (RajaRaja Chola's sister was a Devadasi) and was a continuous tradition. The antiquity of the Devadasi tradition goes back to IVC Harappan period as the statue of the dancing girl from MohenjoDaro indicate. This was my area of research . I had earlier planned to do the research with permission from National Geographic society .I had even prepared an application .But didn't sent it due to some personal circumstances (My husband's illness and death) which prevented me from carrying out the research. (Annexure 1). In that project I had planned a visit to several temples and expected a financial aid from National Geographic for purchase of equipments like Camera etc . But, after 20 years I am conducting that part of the study , without any one else's financial support, and God had so willed that whatever I do should be my own, without any one else's support .

The current study is done with permission from the Archeological society of India,Thrissoor section,Kochin Devaswam Board, Malabar Devaswam Board and the Zamorin of Calicut .

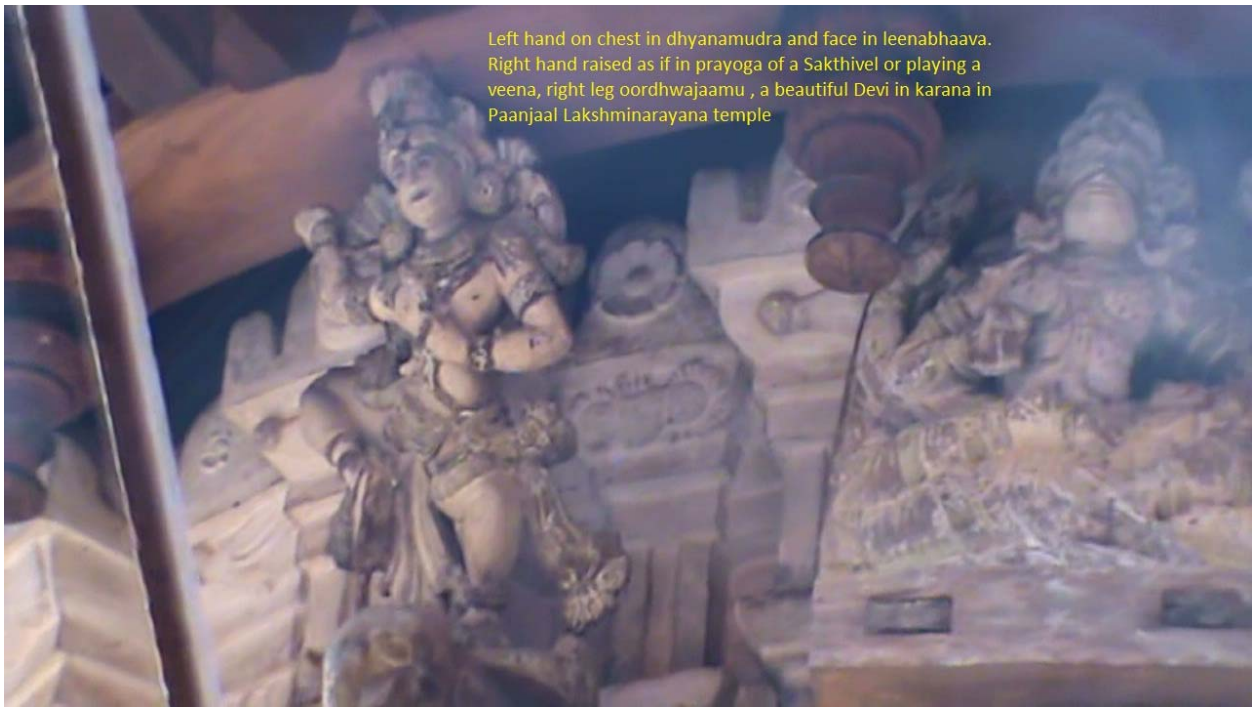
Method adopted :-First scanned the karana figures given by B Natarajan,(Annexure 2) and then drew rough sketches ,(Annexure 3) to compare with karanamudras appearing in Kerala temples. Interestingly ,several different combinations than given in the 108 karana positions are seen , but in different temples, and some of the karana given in Bharathamuni's sloka are not seen , instead variants of them carved

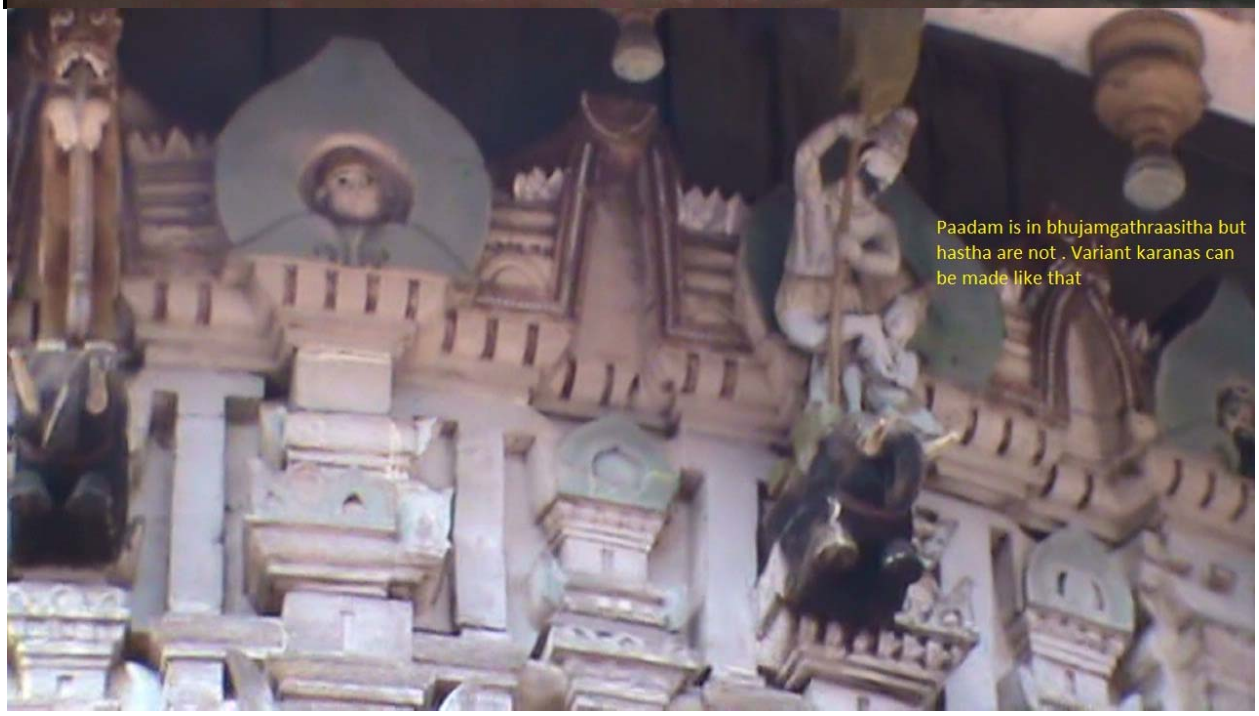
The reason is clear from the definition of Angahara and karana. We will recapitulate that in mathematical order.

Human beings have two hastha and two paada. (4)

One karana = combination of one hastha and one pada

(At a time, a human being with 2 hands and 2 feet can do how many karanas?)


Left hand on chest in dhyanamudra and face in leenabhaava.
Right hand raised as if in prayoga of a Sakthivel or playing a veena, right leg oordhwajaamu , a beautiful Devi in karana in Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple


Paadam is in bhujamgathraasitha but
hastha are not . Variant karanas can
be made like that

Subramanyan in Vyakhyabamudra, Ganapathi in Lalithasana, and Sivaparvathi in Alimganamudra at Netumpurayur Thali

The hands are in kshipthabindukara position of Dandapaada karanam , but feet are not .Narasimha in Netumpurayur Thali

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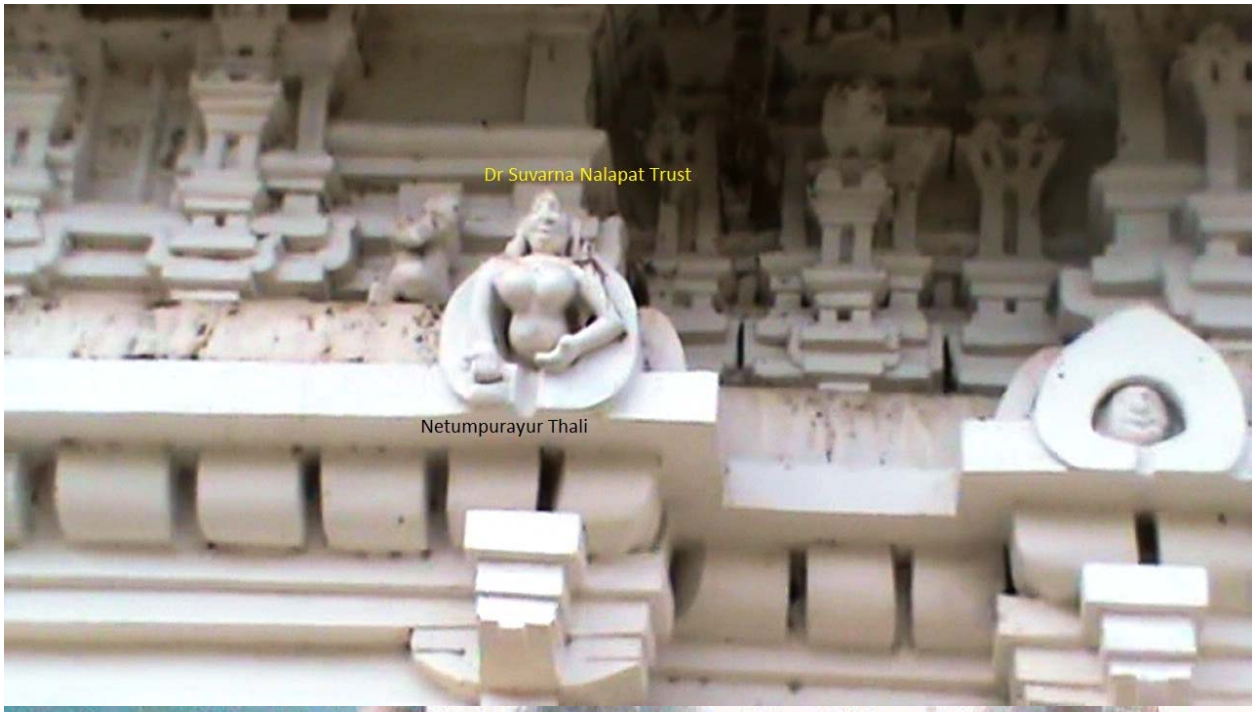

Hindlegs of Vrishabha at Netumpurayur Thali is at Kunchithaavanchitha
(as in Vrishabhakreeditha) and the vrishabha is slightly turned to North
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One Nrithamathruka = Any 2 of the Nrithakarana.

(Therefore a human being with 2 feet and hands can perform how many Nrithamathrukas at a time?)The concept of deities (Mahishasuramardhini) and characters (Like Ravana) with many hands and many faces in Indian Purana has originated actually from the Iconographists, trying to show all karana postures/aayudha and all bhaava on a single figure/idol and thus are derivatives of artistic imagination, rather than mythological beliefs. The stories of such experts in warfare and dance for several millennia among the common people of India is thus explainable. Even during Indus valley Harappan times such figures (a male figure with one leg fixed on ground , one leg raised and both arms stretched in front (possibly in anugrahamudra) and with three heads is reported from Harappa.

Similarly,

One mandakam= 3 karana

One kaaranam= 4 karana (A person with 2 hand and 2 feet can make a different aspect of 4 karana with these for to make one Kaarana at a time.Kaarana means a cause.The root. Therefore the Karana (karma/action) done by the 4 limbs in a human being if all the four are in different karana position makes the root cause/kaarana for Angahaaras in a dance. Mohenjo Daro dancing girl figure, with katihastha of right hand, ooruhastha of left hand showing a Vilppidi mudra, and Vaisakhasthanaka of feet , the left foot brought forward show such a Kaaranam and iconographically represents such a *kaarana* (causal) figure.

Male figure showing ooruhastha and katihastha .Note right leg position. Compare with Indus valley dancing girl. The side of limbs showing the mudra is reversed
Thiruvanchikkulam

When karanas combine in more than 4 numbers, the individual is performing the karana (different) in succession in a performance and using a basic 32 Angahara at a time (8 X 4). These in many samghaathas ,combinations form innumerable Karana, of which at first 64 , then 72 and finally 108 were named and explained by the time of Bharathamuni himself. (Which was before IVC period) . The iconographist has limited application, since he/she is dealing with stone,metal etc which are immovable.Hence as far as possible he/she restricts himself/herself to

the basic positions and mudras. This is what we see in the different postures (including the Sthanakas,aasanas,sayanas etc of idols) which we have discussed in the previous part. The evidence from Kerala show that Kerala Iconographist was using the more ancient basic postures and the rare positions. Since Bharathamuni says Dance and Music originated with Mohini Avathar of Mahavishnu , who is the twin sister of Dhanwanthari, the God of Vaidya , and since this happened during the origin of our mother earth and universe, from milky ocean (Palai saamunda Mana of Ptolemy times) which happens to be the southern ocean of Kerala and Tamil Nad , the origin of dance and music in our parts is not a myth.Moreover, the temples for Mohini in Kerala (like Harikanyakayur) and the several panels of Palazhimathanam,stories of Mohini carved here bear testimony to origin of Bharatham in Kerala/Dravidadesa. Hence this study in kerala temples will provide a continuity of Dravidian Indus civilization with its dance tradition and the Kerala Devadasi matrilinear tradition.

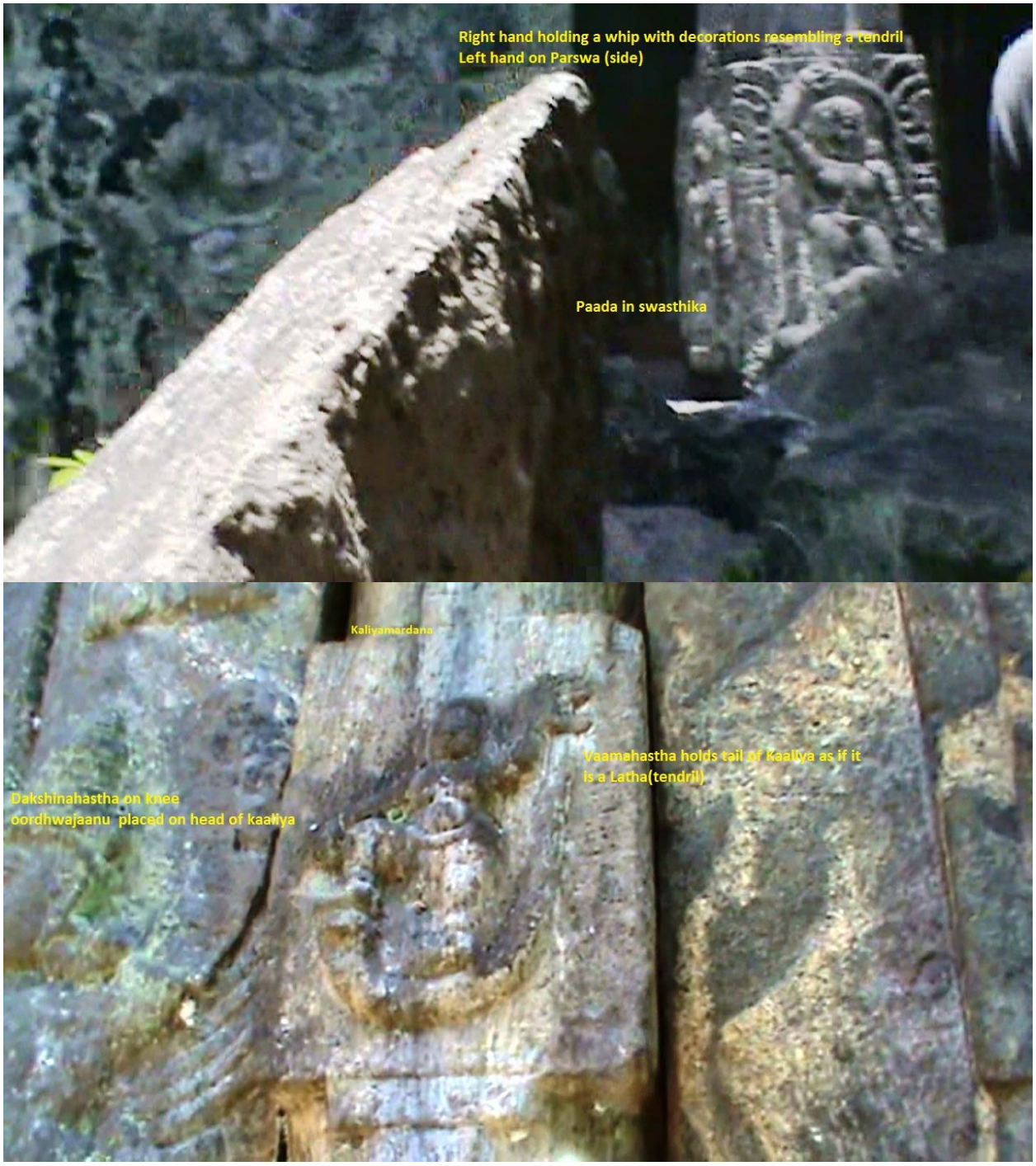
The karana of human beings and even animals , in day to day life , also is given place in the iconography of temples. In dance tradition of Bharathamuni it was the Mohini story of Paalazhimathana which gave rise to dance and music. Later on it was forgotten and the Thripuradahana (called Dimam) of asura became prominent. Siva, taught Bharatha , the ancient tradition so that the cult of dance and music is protected. In Bharatha times these two were the dance dramas enacted by people of India. (Paalaazhimathanam of Vishnu and Dimam/Thripuradahanam) .Later on during Ramayana period stories of Rama became popular. Then In Mahabharatha period (roughly corresponding IVC Harappan) stories of Krishna, Arjuna etc also became popular. Kerala temples are peculiar in that majority show the most ancient Paalaazhimathana and Mohini story. Among Mahabharatha stories Kiratham is prominent in majority of temples. Pallivetta is a common theme which shows the ancestry of entire race from forest tribes and these are still enacted in temple rites .Chandrolsavam (also called Ulsava of Indira/Mahalakshmi) or Indrolsavam is the ancient Paalaaazhimathana story when Gajalakshmi came out of the milky ocean with nectar .Kerala Ayurveda, art and language and bharatham as well as its forest and hill products as its sree (wealth) is celebrated by sharing of such riches by people in festivals at

various places of worship where the stories are also enacted. Mahaakshethra had its own Devadasis to perform during daily sreebali pooja .Smaller temples had services of them on annual festivals. The literary sources from Sanskrit and Tamil and early Malayalam bear testimony to the practice of dance,music and scholarship (iyal,isai,natakam) in temples as part of ritualistic worship of the deity.

Pillars with Karana
Kallambalam Vishnu Wynad
Ruined remains of a great architectural structure
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

A rare karanam .Name unknown. Both hands and feet are kept turned to back, as if ready to fly off
Position for Aakaasagamanam

(.**I would suggest , immeadite preservation of the ruined dilapidated Vishnu temple in Wynad , which contains numerous karana postures and many other artchitectural and artistic rarities, unseen any where else in Kerala, or probably in India itself.)**


Right hand holding a whip with decorations resembling a tendril
Left hand on Parswa (side)
Paada in swasthika
Kaliyamardana
Vaamahastha holds tail of Kaaliya as if it is a Latha(tendril)
Dakshinahastha on knee
oordhwajaanu placed on head of kaaliya

Hanuman guards the gates of Temple of Indian subcontinent at the South
Left hand Ooruhastha, and right carrying Maruthuvamala (Mount of Medicines) is the son of winds (Monsoons) from Kaapeyagothra Hanuman
Hanuman of Kapeyagothra , medicines, winds and green leafs are all related to South India , to its forests and Mountains and Oceanic winds and travels.
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

In Tamil Nad temples all the karana are seen in a single temple, neatly arranged on panels with Slokas from Bharathamuni's Natyasasthra. This was a late attempt to protect the art form. In Kerala which is more ancient, such organized collection is not seen in any one temple.One has to look for the Karana visiting various temples . This is a hard task . If at all several karana are seen in a single temple, it is in the ruined damaged temple of Vishnu at Wynad , which requires immeadite protection as a National Heritage site in Kerala .

Kallambalam Vishnu .Wynad
The temple is in ruins
Requires protection as
National Heritage site in
Kerala
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Mythical Animal
(Gomriga) of Indus
people with a deity on its
back
Kallambalam Vishnu Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vrischikacharanam

Vrischikam

Yaksha bearing the weight of the superstructures
The black stone show Vrischika karanam
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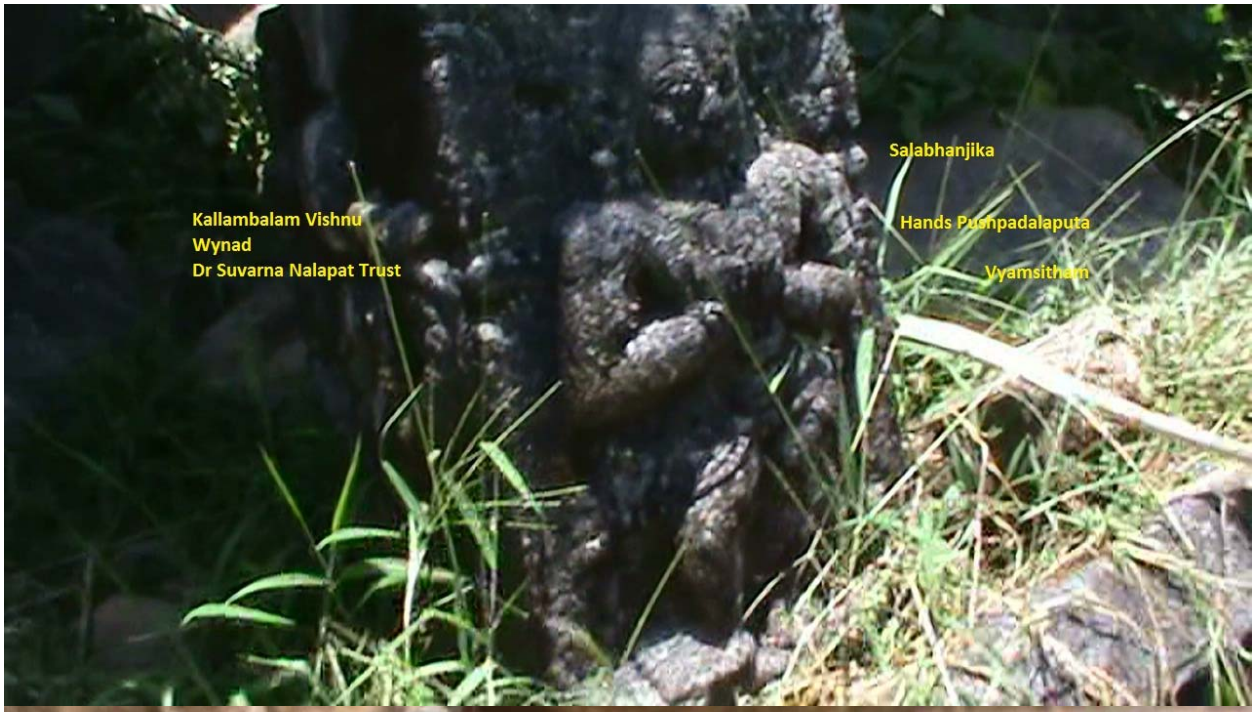
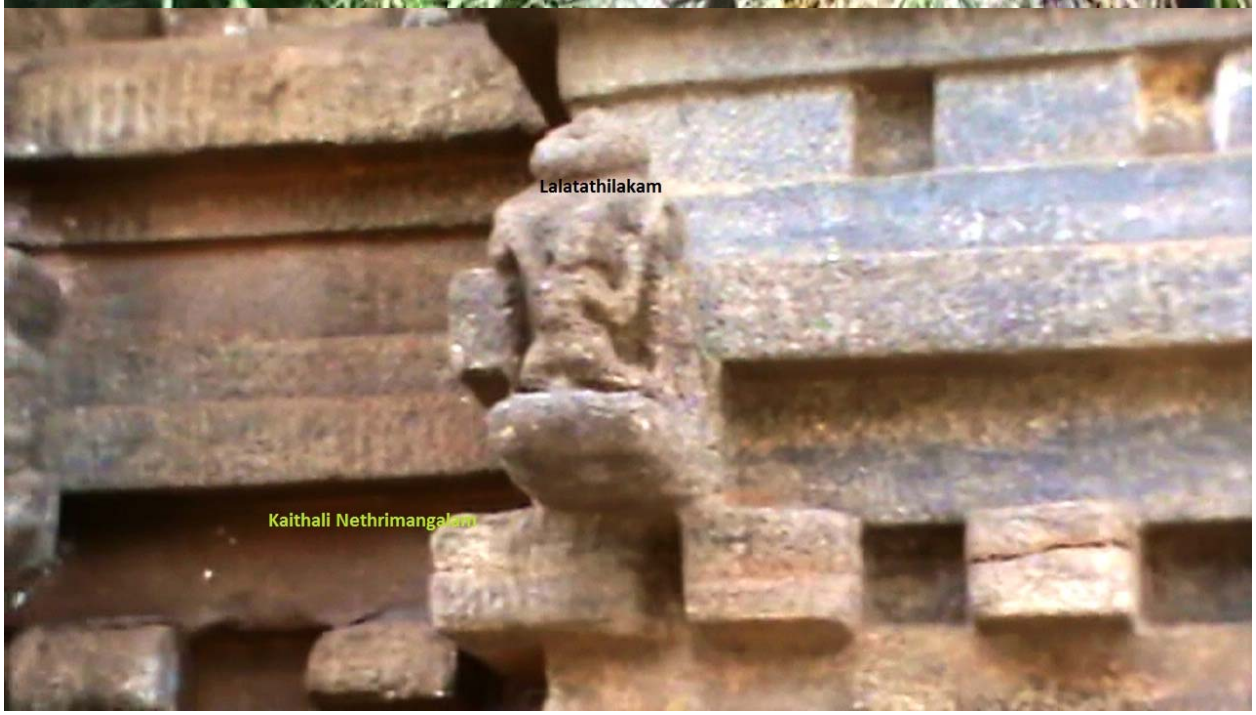
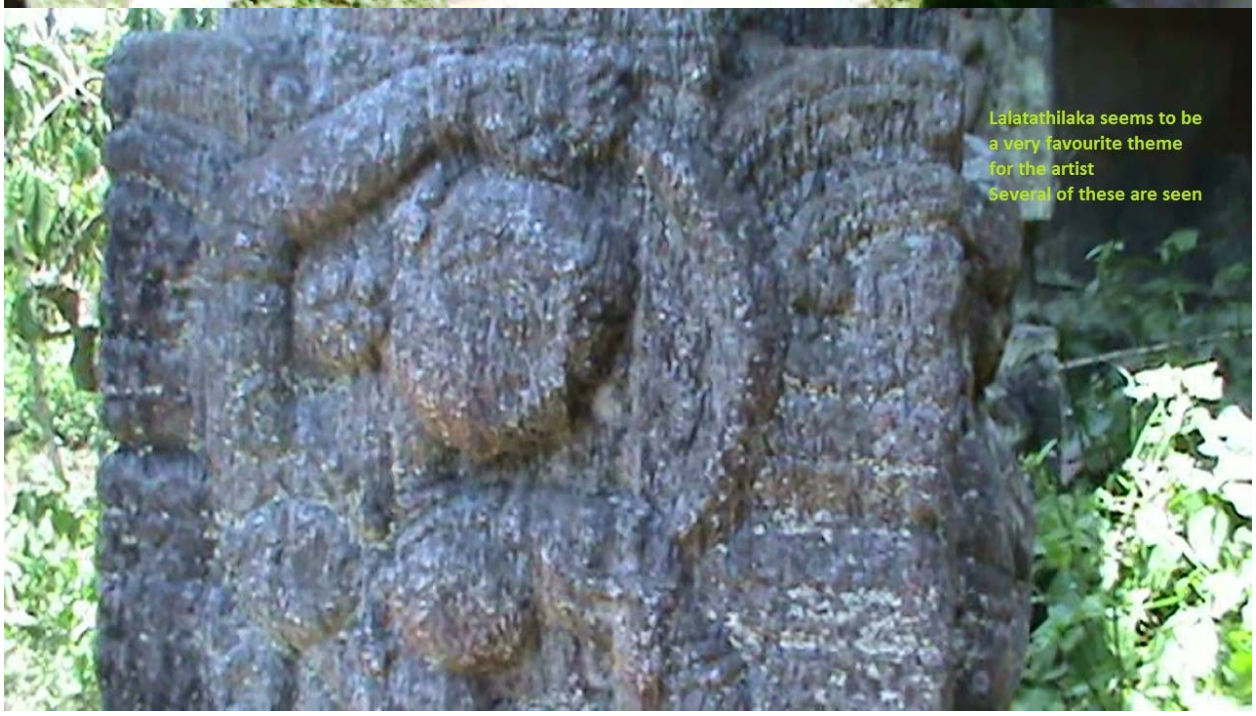
One leg straight and the other bent as in the Chathura karanam .But hand position is not that of Chathurakaranam .Hands are brought above head (Bahuseershouchitho Hastho) as in Vrischika Charana
This charana is not seen in the plates of Thillai Nataraja. See definition of how Karana is made according to Bharathamuni , given at the beginning of this book.
Kallambalam Vishnu Wynad

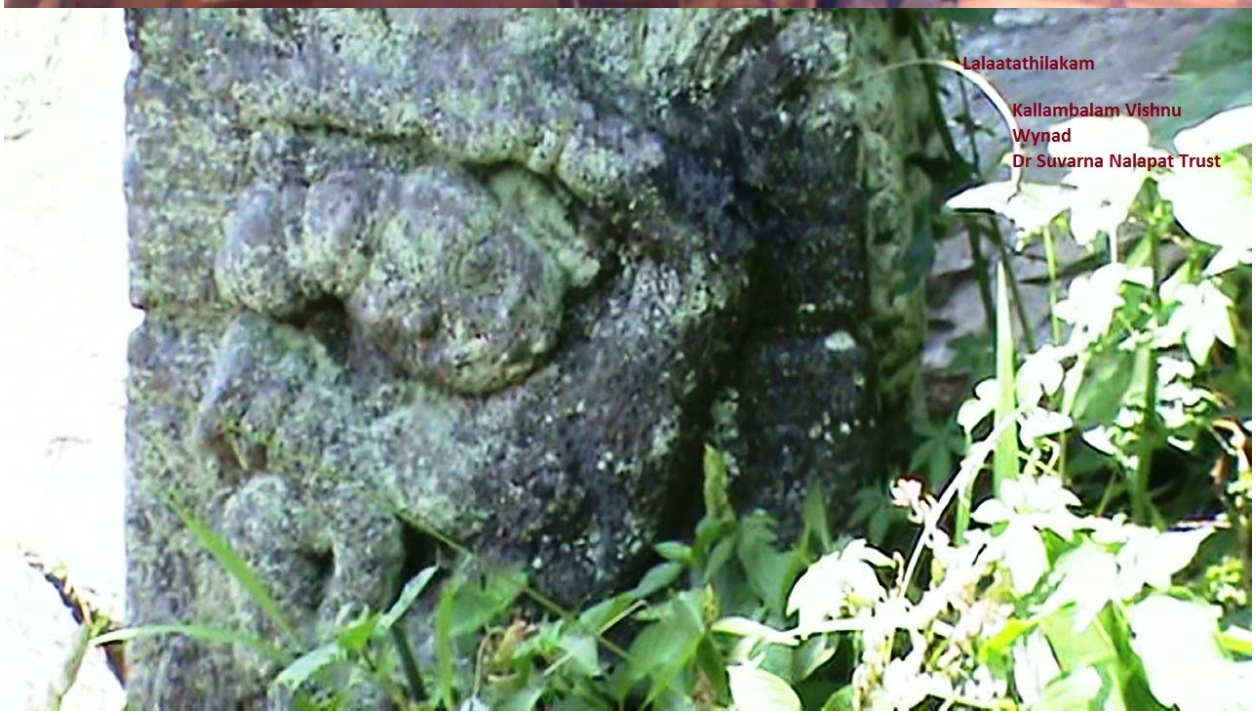

Salabhanjika
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Hands Pushpadalaputa
Vyamsitham


Lalatathilakam
Kaithali Nethrimangalam

Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Lalaatathilaka


Lalatathilaka seems to be
a very favourite theme
for the artist
Several of these are seen

variant of vrichikakuttitham
can even be called different variant of lalatathilakam
left arm in different posture
vrichikacharanam


Lalaatathilakam
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Veliyambamkotta
Bhagavathi
temple
foot bhujamgathrasitha but
hands different. rt hand raised
thaaditha.left ooruhastha.

Chakramandalam
Avittathoor

Thiruvalayanad Calicut

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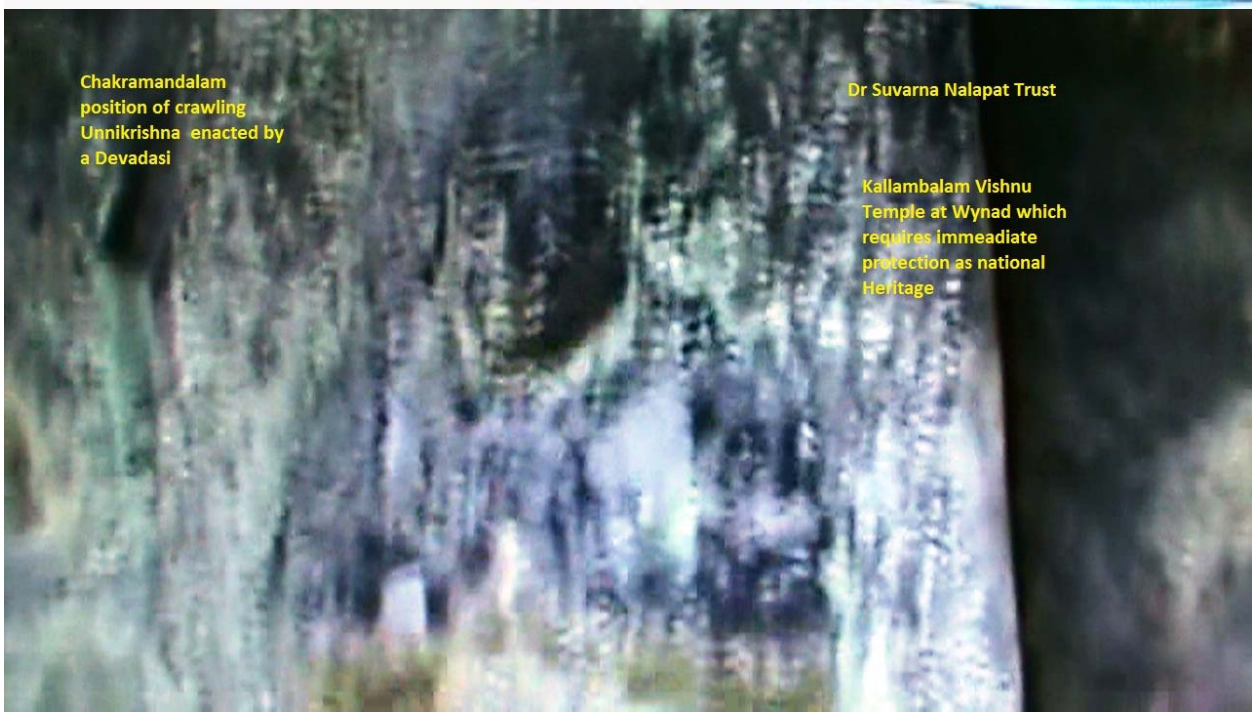
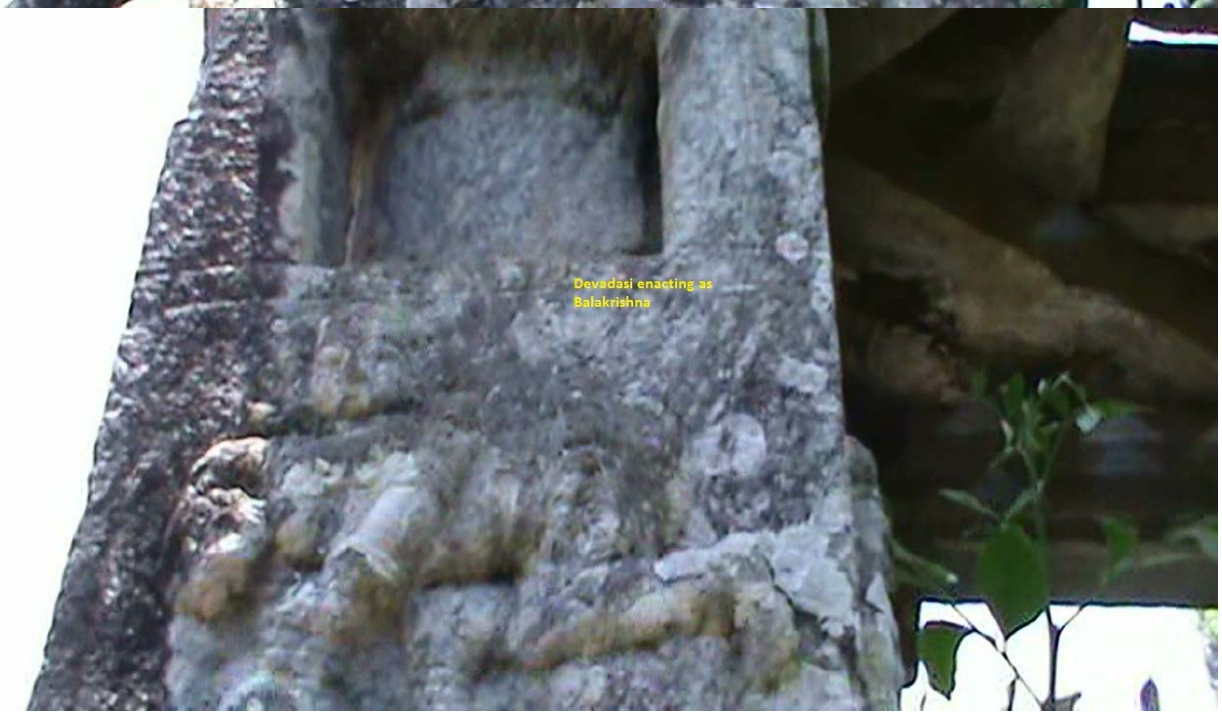
Naavaamukunda temple


Chakramandalam position of crawling Unnikrishna enacted by a Devadasi
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Kallambalam Vishnu Temple at Wynad which requires immeadiate protection as national Heritage

A devadasi enacting as infant Krishna



Devadasi enacting as Balakrishna

Another Infant Krishna figure
on pillar in front of Sanctum
Sanctorum

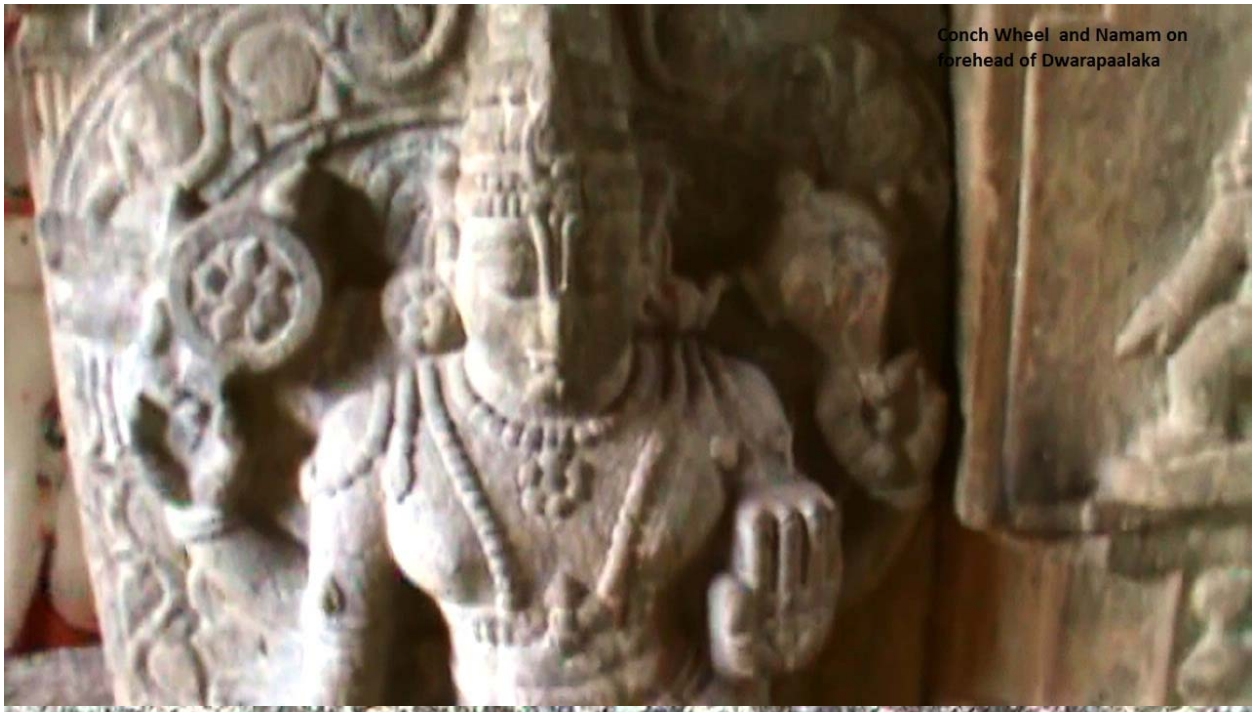
Dandakarechitham
Swasthika
Kunchitham

Thaadanamudra
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Arjuna and Kiratha
Swasthikapaadam

A female Guru teaching a white man
Guru and friend are black
Both have vyakhyanamudra.Their hands intertwined as swasthika

Swasthikapaada
Kunchithapaada

Garudaasanam .Kallambalam Vishnu Temple .This is a dilapidated ancient temple in Wynad, a treasurehouse for all iconographists, artists and historians. Needs preservation .
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Kunchitham
Varadahastha
see details of ornaments
Swasthika
Devotee firmly embracing right hand of Vishnupaarshada Dwarapala for Protection
Anjalihastha


Conch Wheel and Namam on forehead of Dwarapaalaka

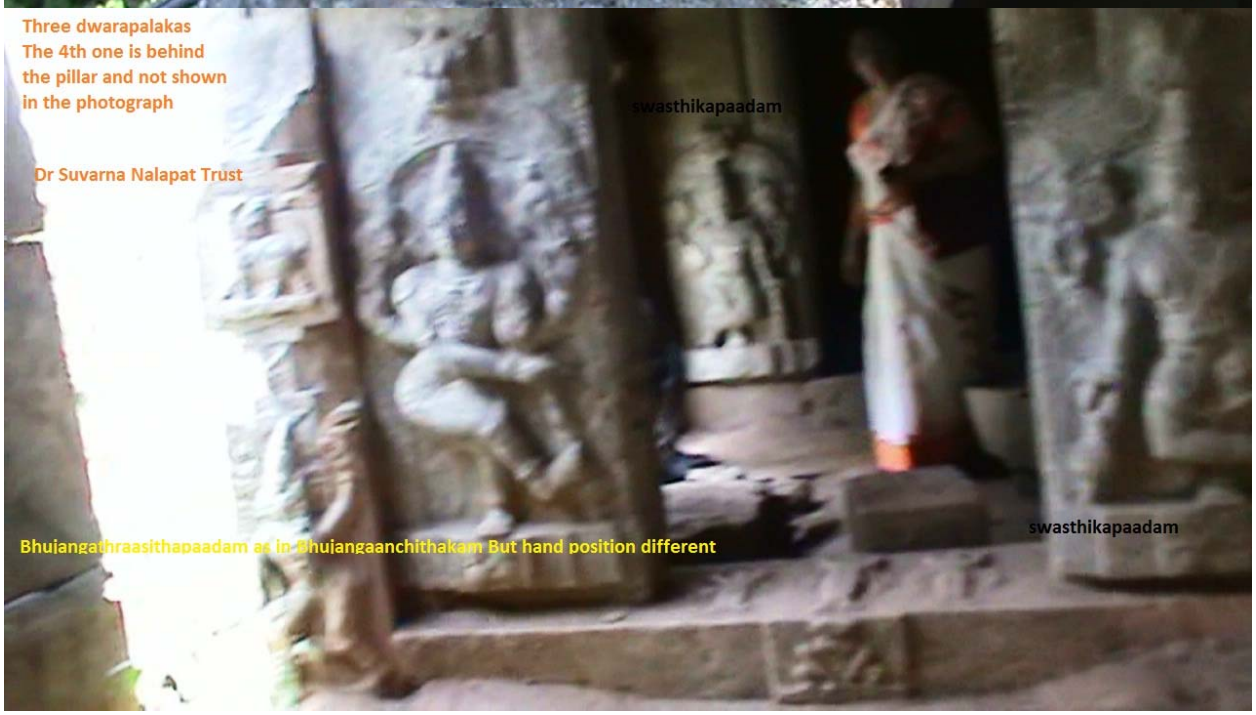
Snake charming
Feet positioned as Kunchithapaada. Hands as in Bhujamgathraasitha

Devotees on pillar faces

Hands in Kunchitha position. But feet are not

Kallambalam Vishnu Temple Wynad

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust



Three dwarapalakas
The 4th one is behind the pillar and not shown in the photograph

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swasthikapaadam

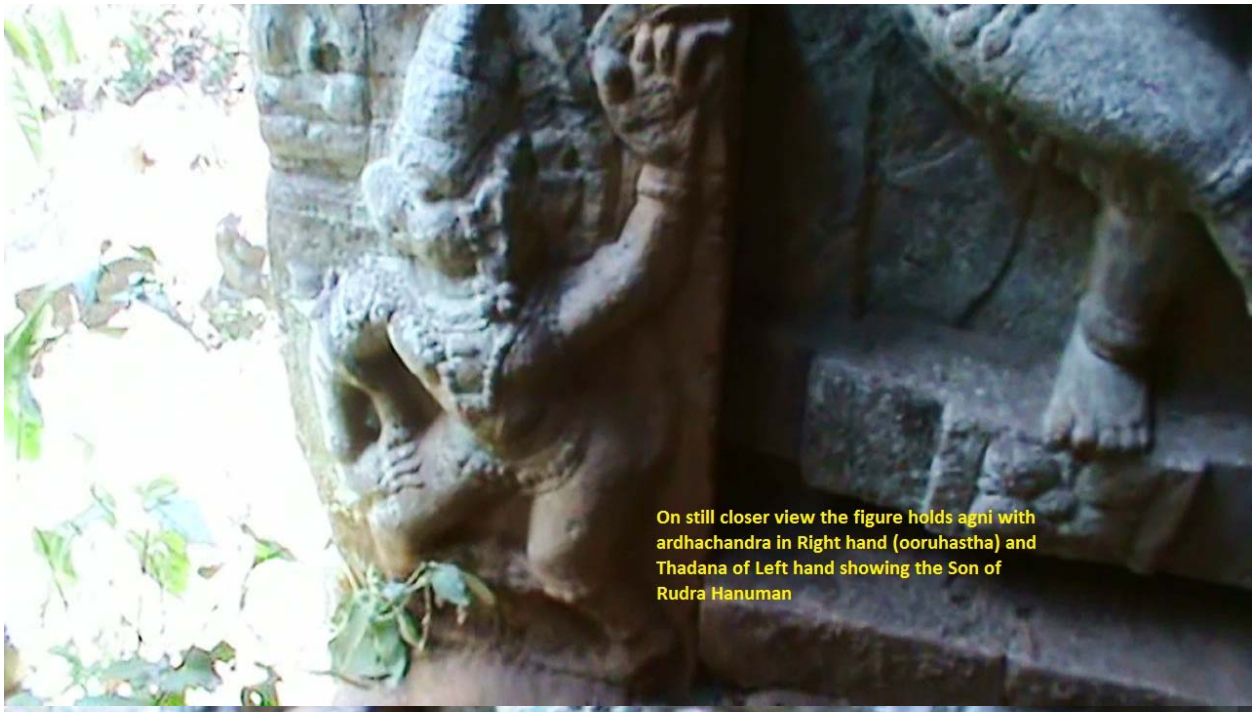
swasthikapaadam

Bhujangathraasithapaadam as in Bhujangaanchithakam But hand position different

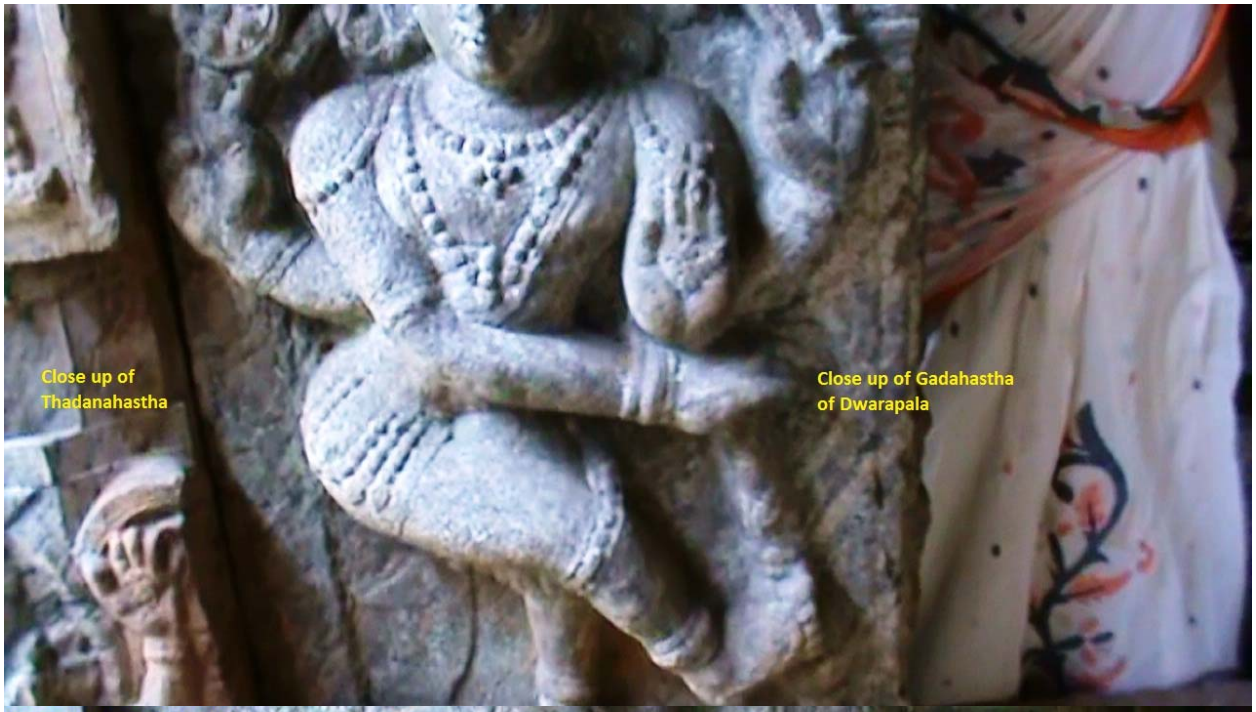
Vishnuparshada with conch,wheel and mace and abhayamudra guarding sanctum sanctorum of Batheri Jain temple .Swasthikapaadam.

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Mathalli
Swasthikapaada
Bhujangathraasithapaada
(Right leg)
Rt leg slightly brought forward with a oordwajaanu
Rt hand ooruhastha like Mathalli. Left hand raised with a Thaalam
A Nrisimha with ardhayogapattaasana
(without yogapattam)


On still closer view the figure holds agni with ardhachandra in Right hand (ooruhastha) and Thadana of Left hand showing the Son of Rudra Hanuman

On closer look Left hand show Thadanamudra
Right hand of Dwarapala crossed to left side with Gadahastha in it

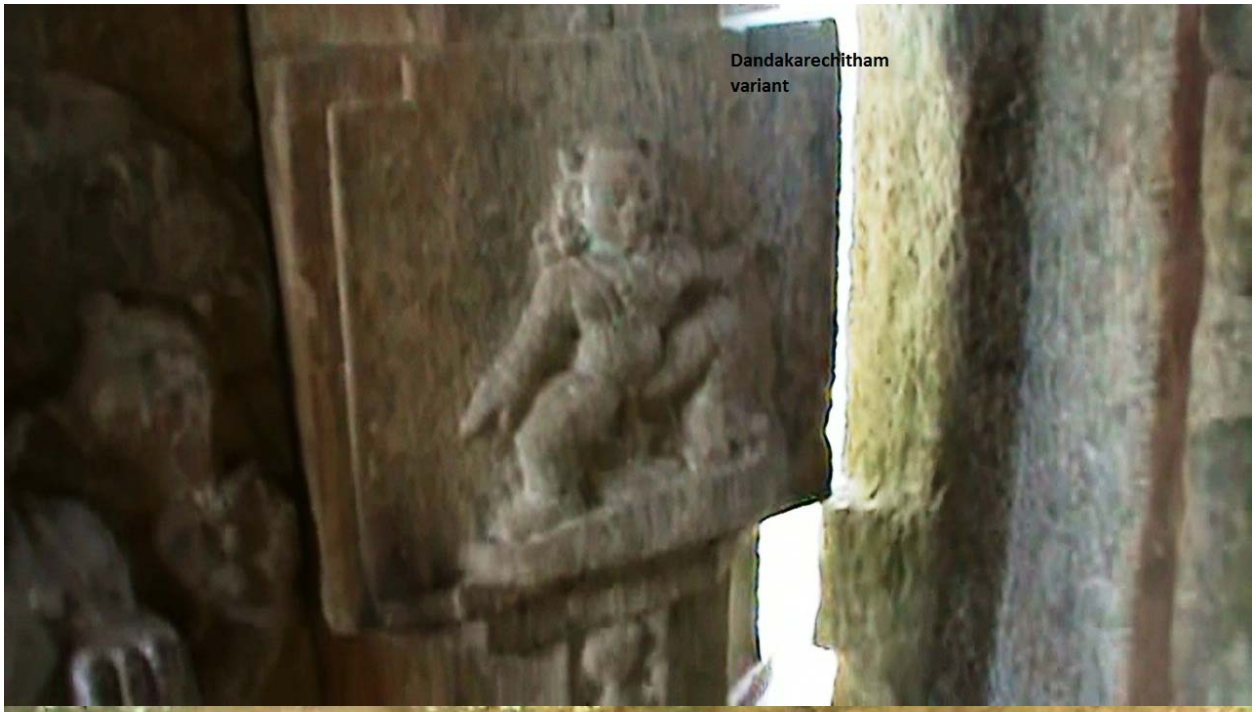

Close up of
Thadanahastha
Close up of Gadahastha
of Dwarapala

Over crown of Dwarapala
threeheaded Goat (Aja)
Brahmaprajapathi

Aarurukshu state of
Yogacharya
Yogapattam has not been given .
Yogapattam not present. Effort to control senses. Trying to be a
Jithendriya/Jina.But not yet succeeded

This position of Narasimha is also Chakramandala. According to Thanthrasasthra , Sudarsanachakramandala has Nrisimha power, and hence is mpre Saiva (Samhara) than Saantha Vaishnava . Aarurukshu since he has not controlled all his passions , is unable to control anger too.Hence this symbolism in Iconography. Krishna avathar is considered as BalaNarasimha and as avathar of

Sudarsanam to destroy evil forces of Nature.

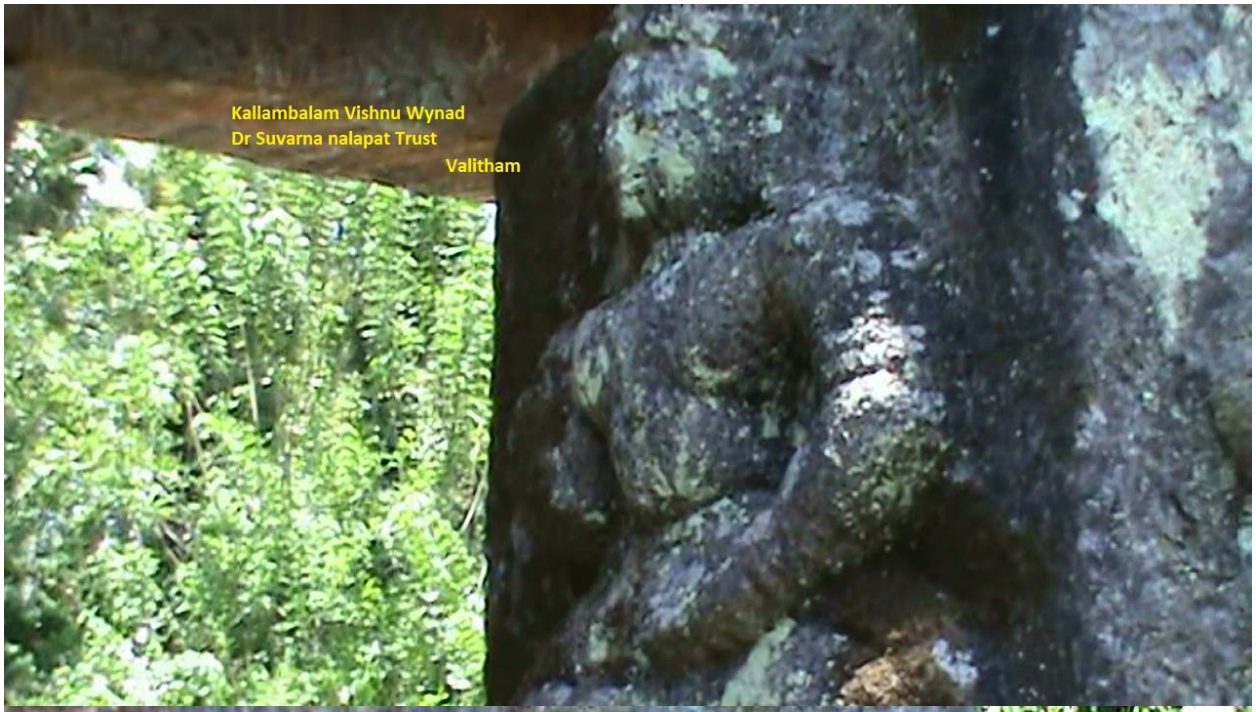


Dandakarechitham variant

Karanam .A variant of Katibhraantham

Katibhraantham

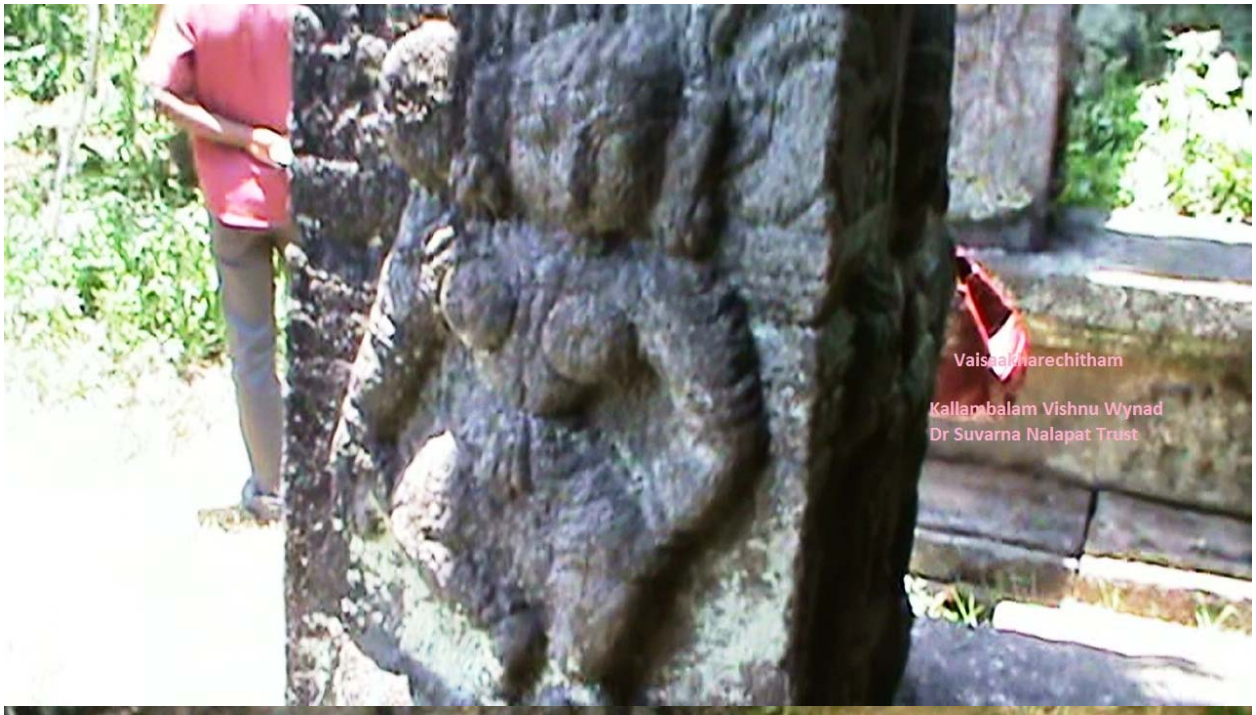
A woman devotee with a musical instrument in left hand, a akshamala/or chilamp in right, protruded toungue in ecstacy of God intoxication


Kallambalam Vishnu Wynad
Dr Suvarna nalapat Trust
Valitham

Ardhaswasthikam . The position of Right arm is in head instead of chest in Chidambaram plates
ooruhastham
Swasthlkam

Ghoornitham

Lalitham
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Vaishnavarechitham
Kallambalam Vishnu Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
A karanam Possibly
bhujamgathrasitham
from position of
right leg

Pushpaputahasthamudra
Kunchithapaada

KACHAMKURICHI

Kadavalloor

Naavaamukunda

Poonkunnam siva temple

Poothadi Pranala of Siva

Poothadi, Siva-Vishnu Temple : Pranala of Vishnu

Pranala of Maniyamkottappan Vishnu Temple
Maniyamkottappan
Wynad

Thriprayar

Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan

musician playing
yaazh
Kadavalloor

kadavalloor
woman carrying
pooppaalika

Yaanam

Kadavalloor

kadavalloor

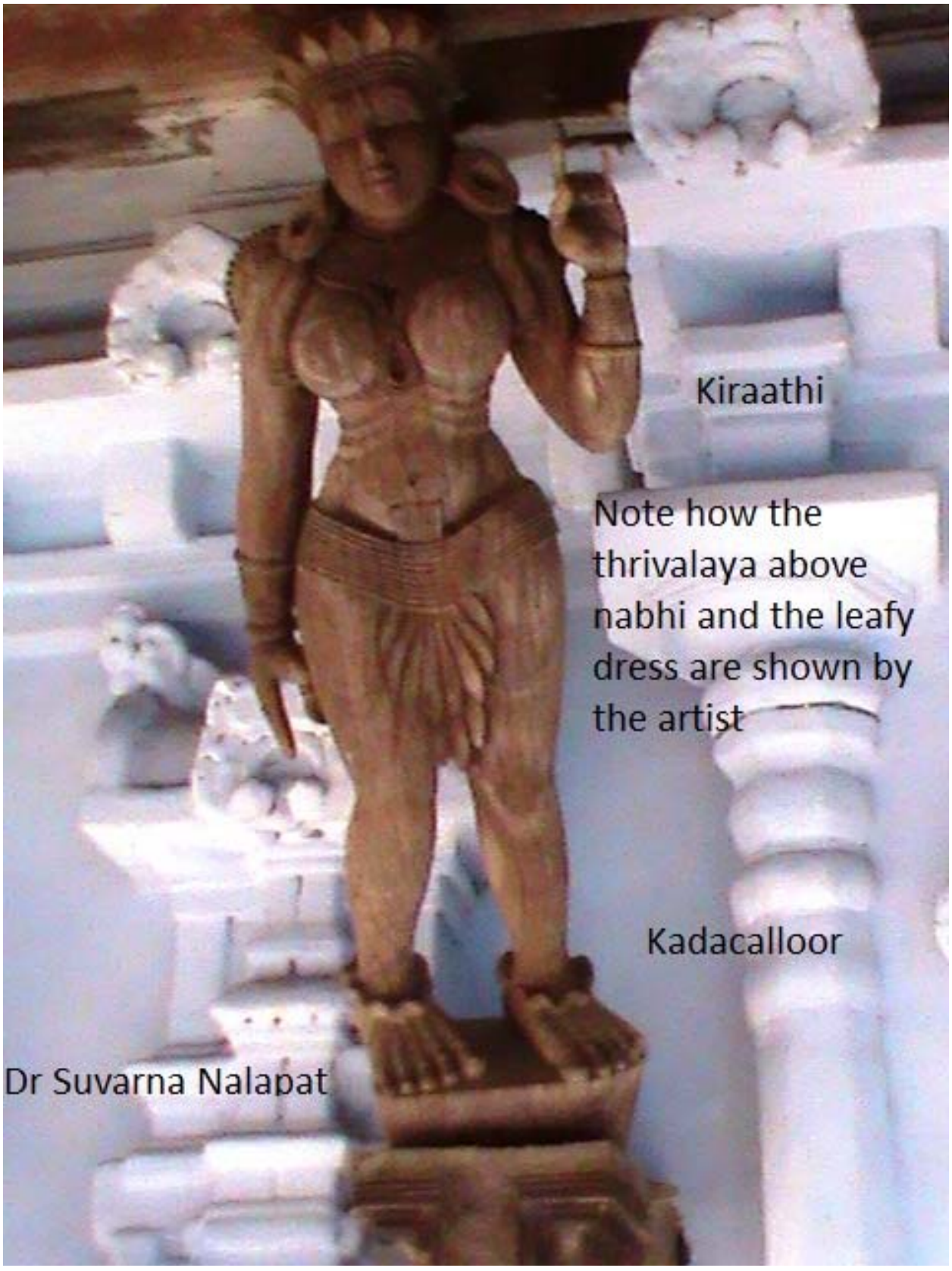
Kadavalloor

Ravana carrying Sita in Pushpaka .This is an example of
a multiple karana samghaatha.Below pushpaka the twin
Monsoons (Aswins) are seen

Devi in thapas

Sikharamudra
Alidasana

prathyaalidasana


Kiraathi
Note how the thrivalaya above nabhi and the leafy dress are shown by the artist
Kadacalloor
Dr Suvarna Nalapat

Kadavalloor
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Kadavalloor
Scholar with
grantha in hand
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Shiva
Maan
Mazhu
Kadavalloor
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Kadavalloor
In left hand a shield
Chilamp in ankles
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Kadavalloor
Child in dhyanamudra
May be Vaamana
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Kadavalloor
Left hand holds
Plough showing
occupation
A rare karana
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Nithambakaranam at Pallimanna siva temple
Dwarapala in this posture is rare
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

salabhanjika with manjeera in
hands Kadavalloor
dr suvarna nalapat trust

Oorakam pillar show musicians dancers

Keezhthali Methala
Kodungalloor .Idols destroyed
by attack of Tipu Sultan
Idols are in meditative posture, sukhasana
and features seem to indicate very good
artsmanship

destroyed idols in meditation, sukhasana, well carved features Keezhthali Methalakkodungalloor
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Oorakam Mahout climbing elephant

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A chariot shaped to symbolically represent Jeevo Jeevasya Jeevanam has three Natyakarana combined in one figure.
The figure on right has right hand on ooru and the figure on left has left hand upwards reaching the head. This combined makes Matthalli .If only the hands of the left figure are considered it conforms to an Ardhamatthalli .
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Eating Karmaphala, Crocodile of samsara eating the human and three Nrithakarana in one, makes Prahelika, a Vedic system of Aesthetics by Symbolism .
Kallambalam Vishnu Temple Wynad
If we take the left hand of the left figure as touching forehead of animal, and the righthand of the rightfigure as the katihastha of the left animal and the middle (the left hand of left figure) as his left leg forming a Vrischikapaada we can combine a Lalaatathilaka too
Matthalli
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

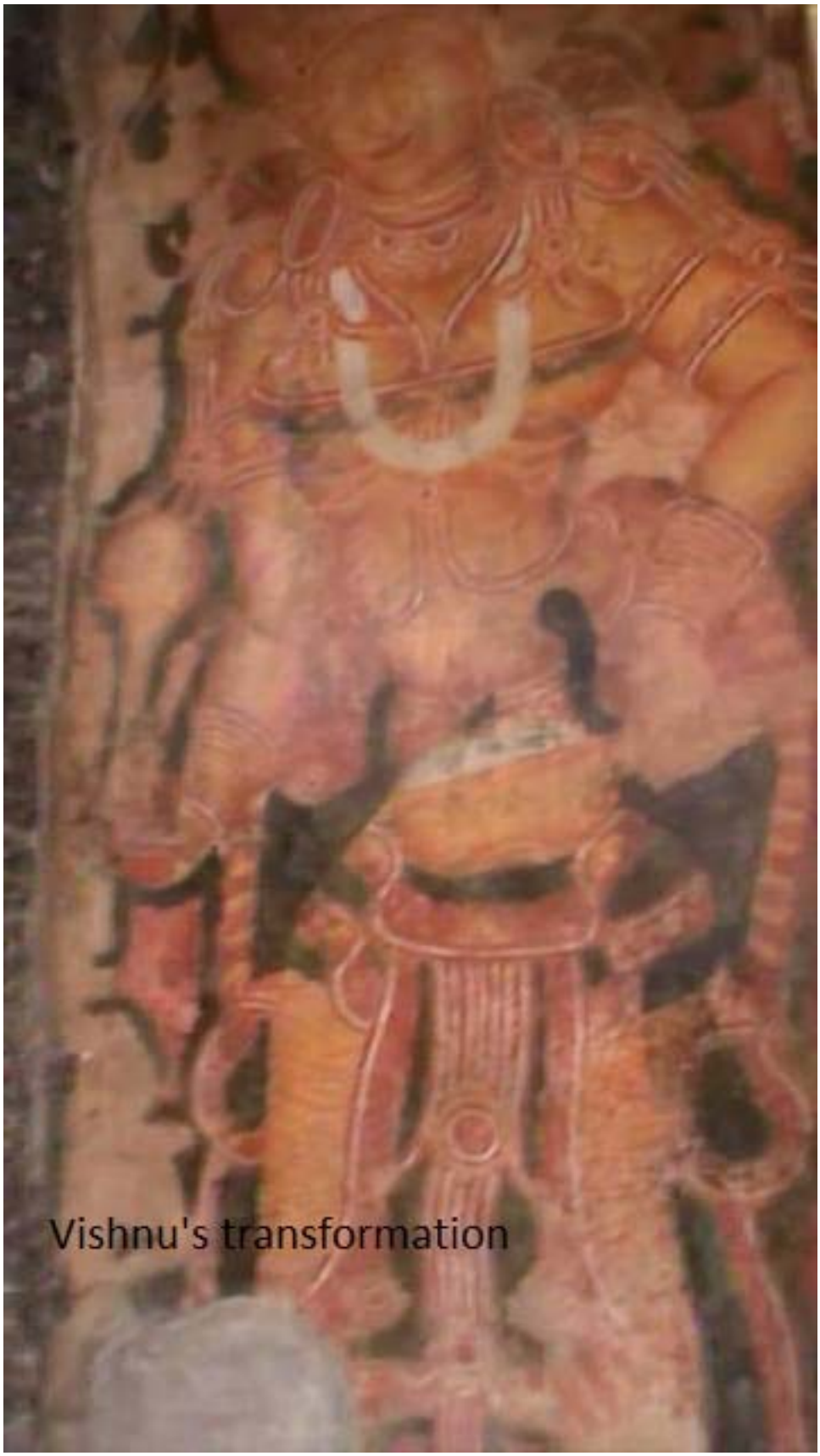
Ardhamatthalli
Aakshiptharechitham
Vikshipthaksipthakam
Leenam showing
Prasaarithasirodharam
Paadam in leenam here is not samapada but the same as in the two figures nearby showing a continuous dynamic dance movement

The three dancing Karana figures are in front of a Royal prince watching them dance .
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

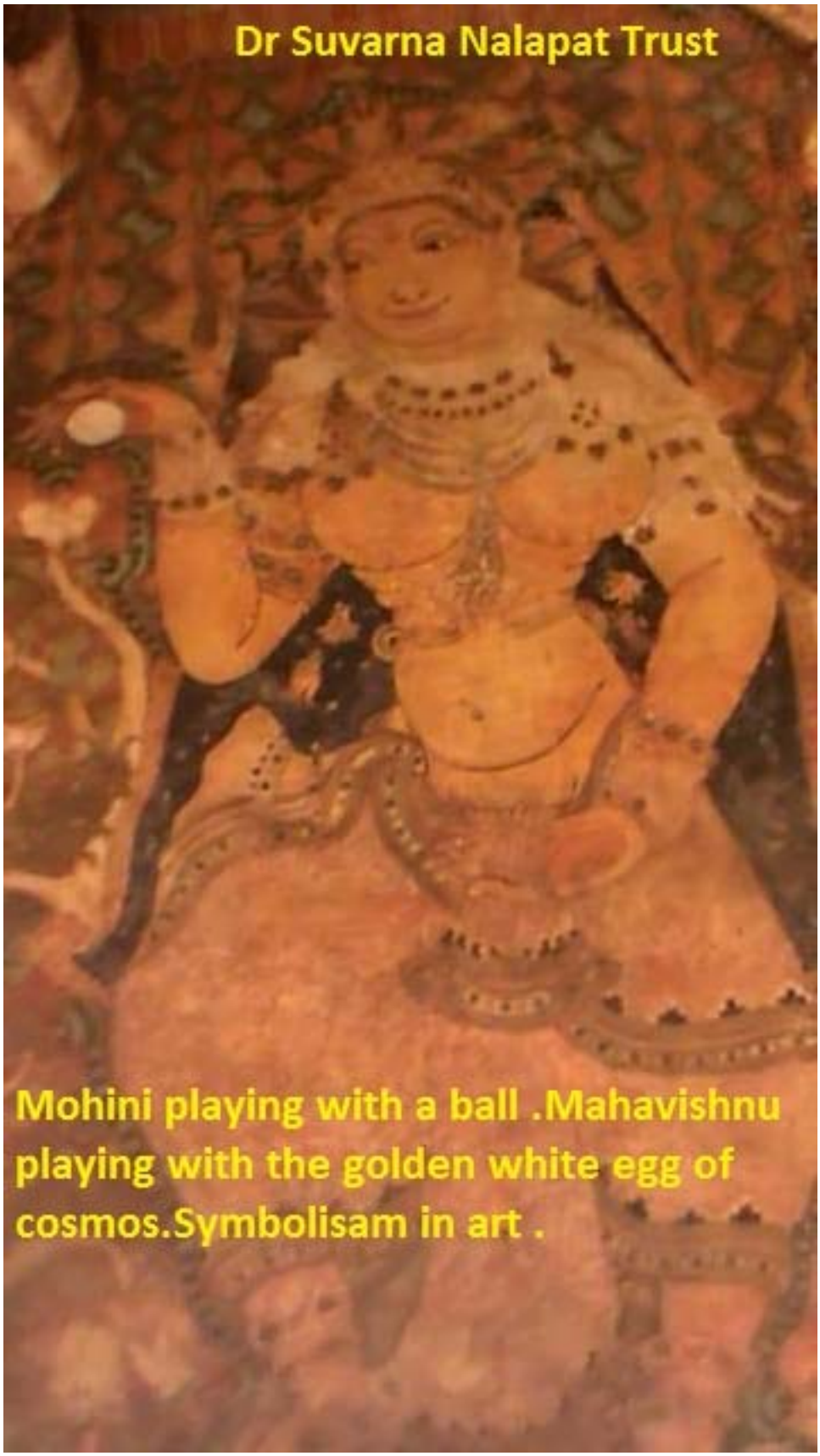
Karanam
Leenam with
prasaarithasirodharam

It was during Paalaazhimathanam Mohini was born for the sake of winning over the Amritha from Asuras to Devas. From evil forces to good forces. The transformation of male Vishnu to female Mohini resulted in Kaisikivrithi and Lasya and Bharathamuni says the first time dance and drama was enacted at that time. The transformation figure is shown in Chammanthitta Murals.Chammanthitta was earlier known as Brahmanthitta and was a vedic learning center.

Vishnu (Dhanwanthari)
transforms into Mohini
Chammanthitta



Vishnu's transformation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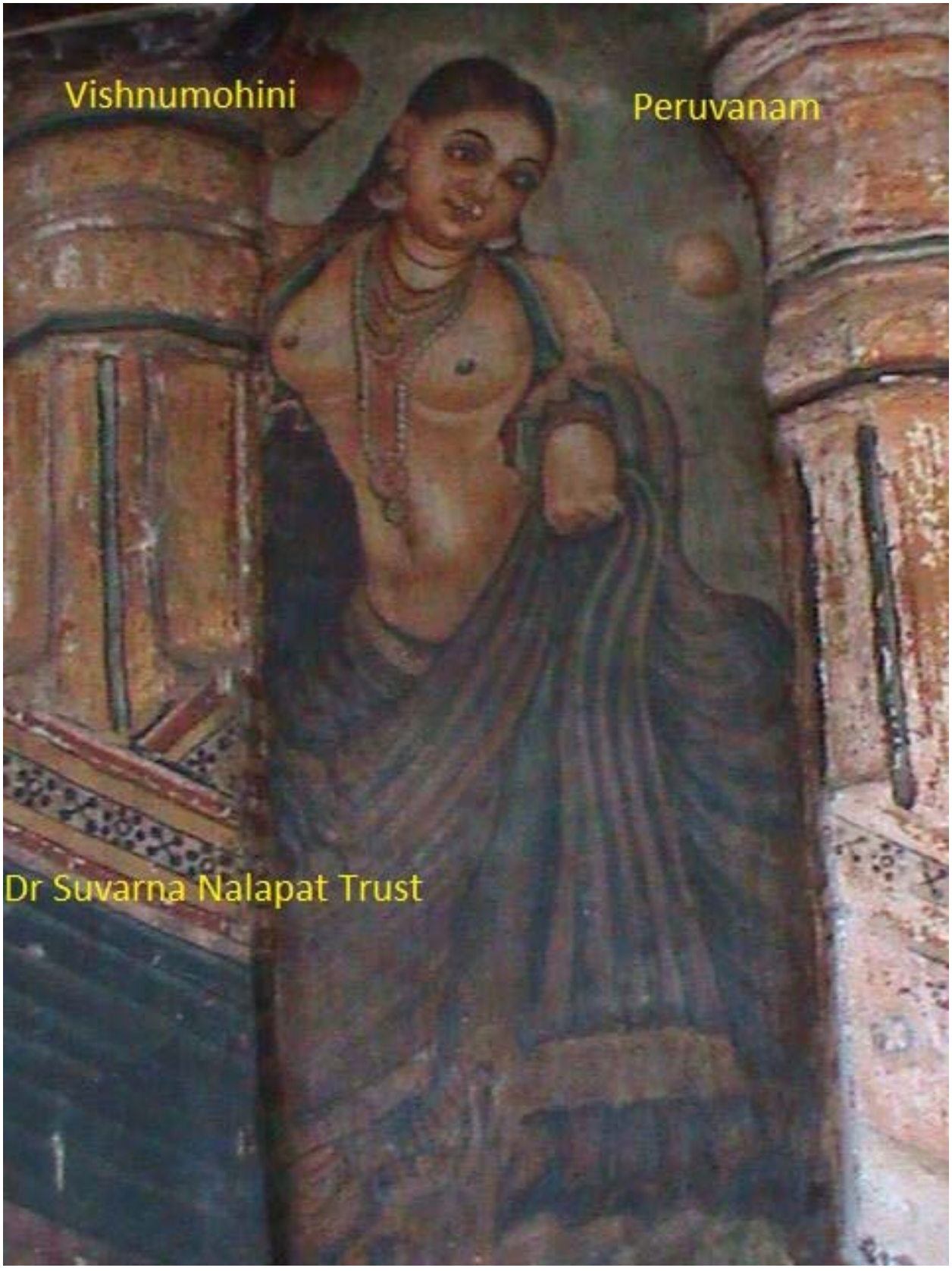
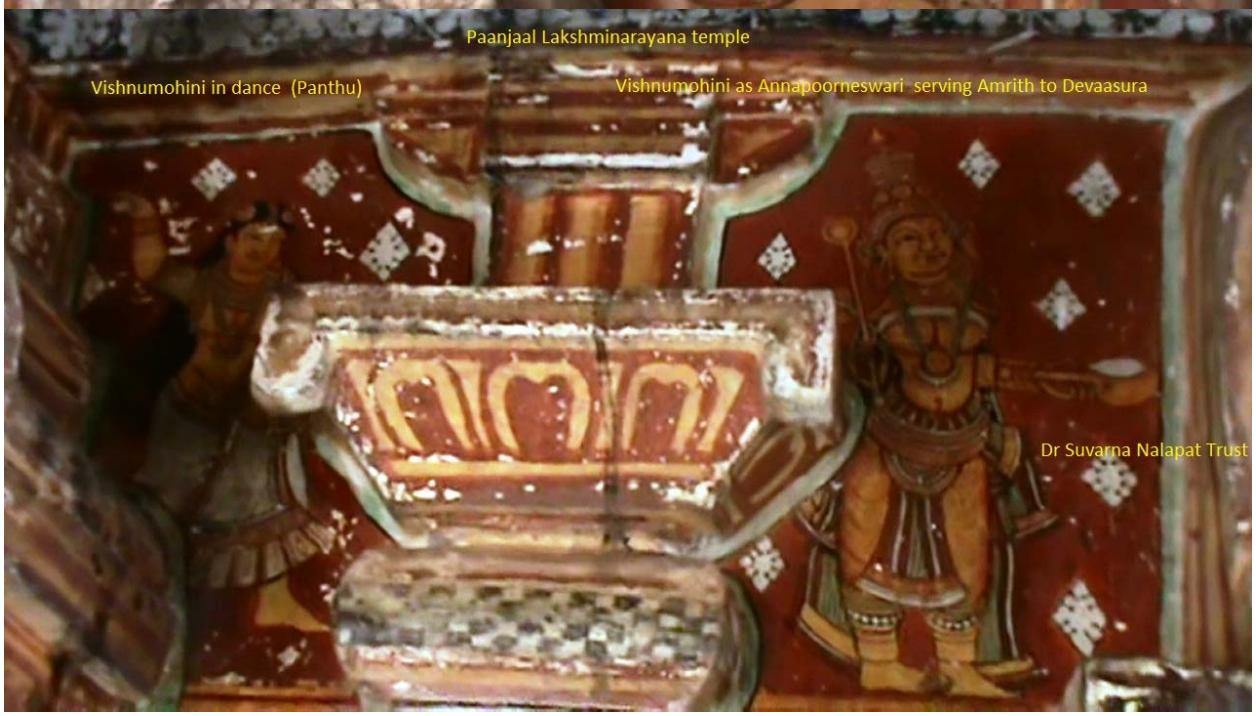
Mohini playing with a ball .Mahavishnu playing with the golden white egg of cosmos.Symbolisam in art .

Mahavishnu as Mohini
Avathar
Mural
Kerala
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Vishnumohini
Peruvanam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Feet in dolapaadakramam as in Premkholitha.Right hand is as in Karihasthakam .Left hand is as in Soochikaranam .Mohini at Pallimanna Siva temple

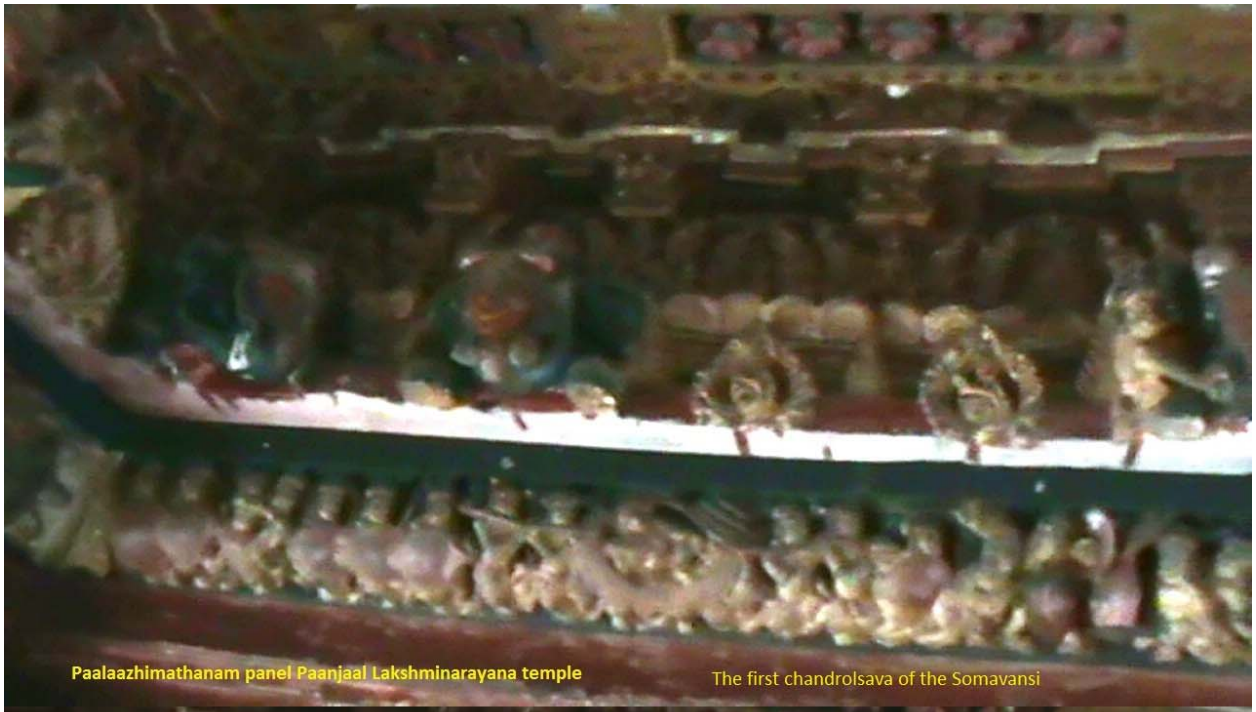


Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple

Vishnumohini in dance (Panthu)

Vishnumohini as Annapoorneswari serving Amrith to Devaasura

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust



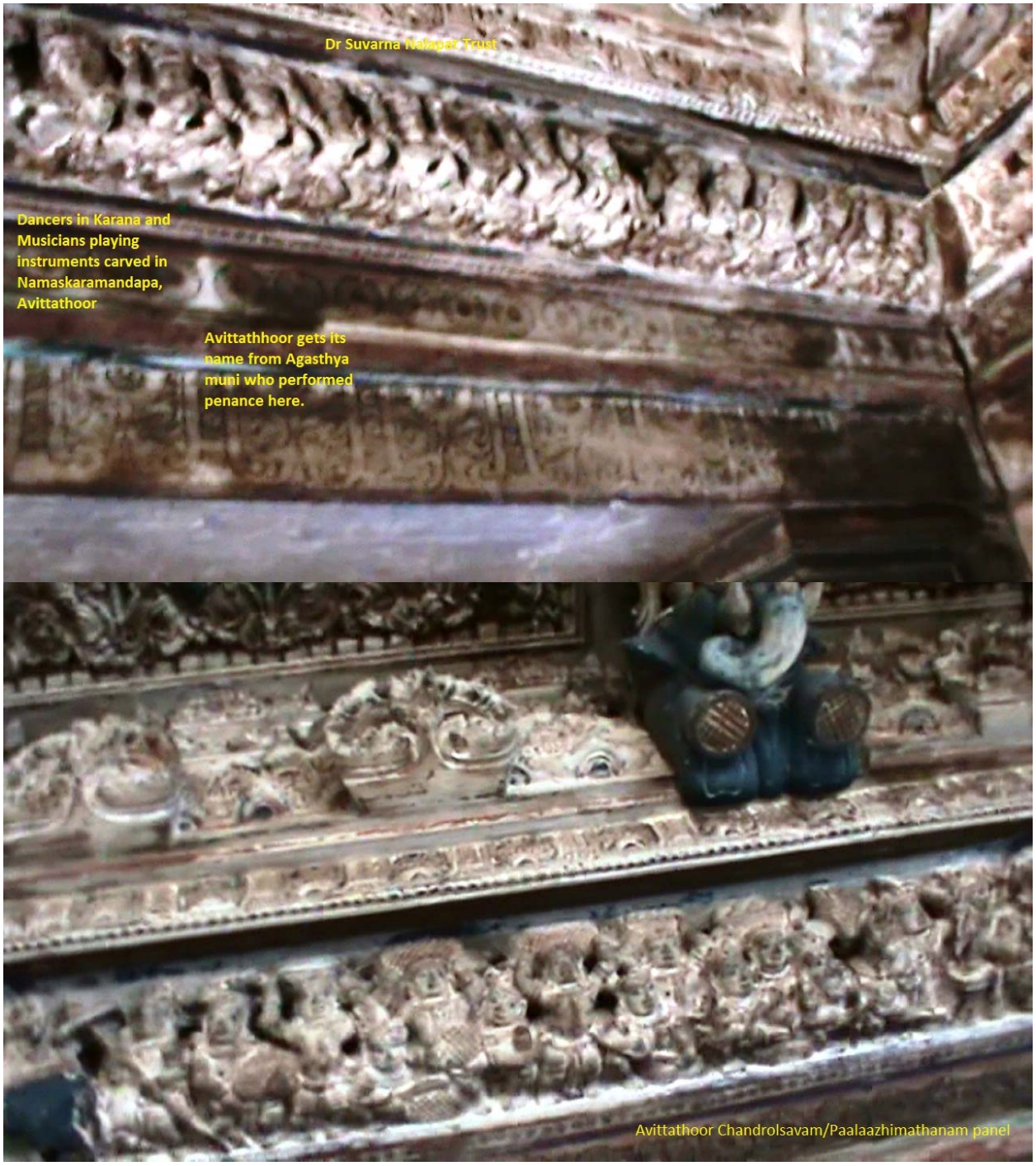
Paalaazhimathanam panel Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple

The first chandrolsava of the Somavansi

Veicles,instruments Palazhimathanam panel Paanjaal

Avittathoor

A variant of
Thalasamsphotitham
Avittathoor
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Avittathoor_ paalaazhimathanam panel
Dancers


Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Dancers in Karana and Musicians playing instruments carved in Namaskaramandapa, Avittathoor
Avittathhoor gets its name from Agasthya muni who performed penance here.
Avittathoor Chandrolsavam/Paalaazhimathanam panel

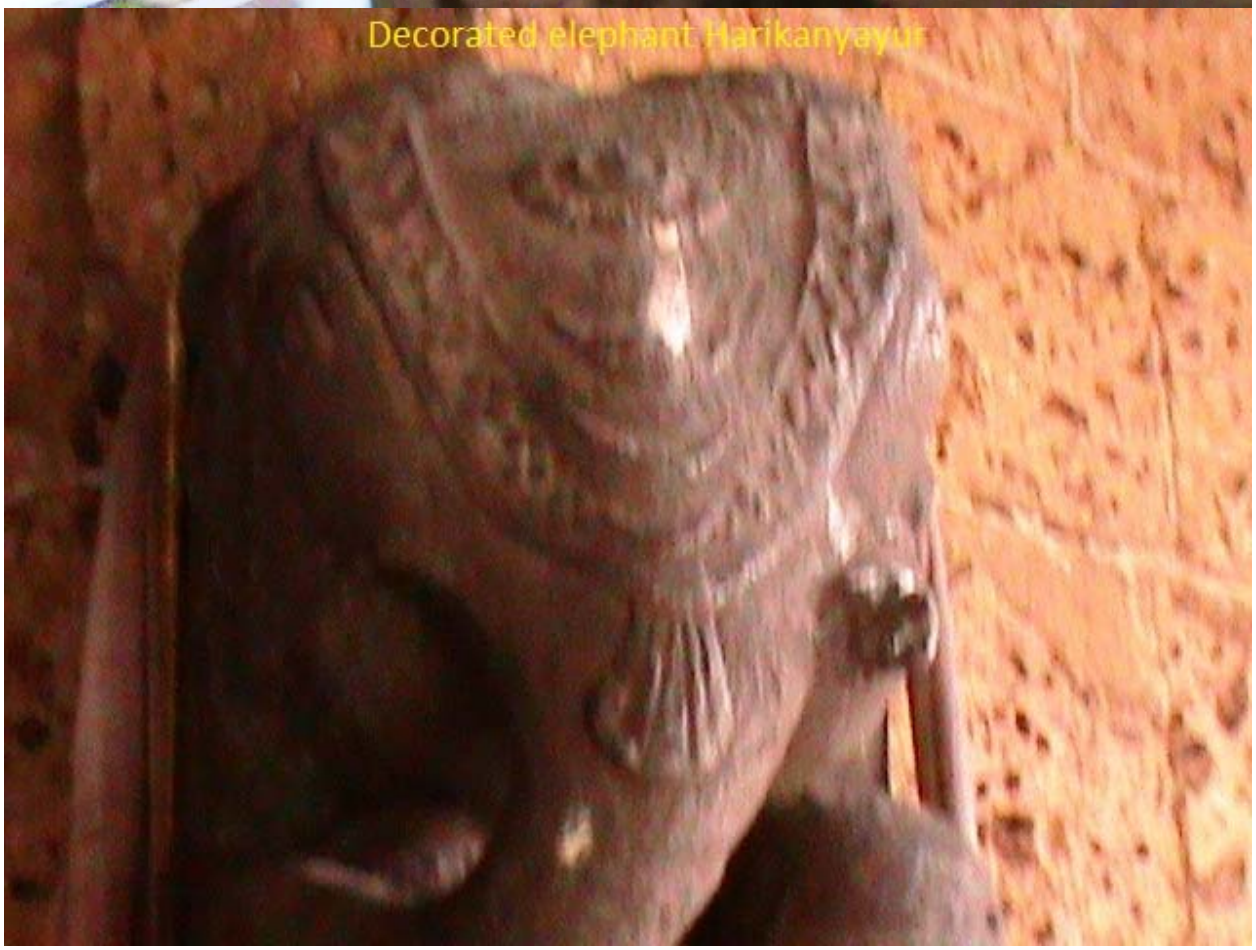
Chandrolsavam panel balikkal Harikanyayur

Chandrolsavam Harikanyayur

Chandrolsavam Harikanyaur

Chandrolsavam on balikkal Women with ashtamangalya and musical instruments

Chandrolsavam dancers and musicians



Decorated elephant Harikanyayur

Bhasmasura and Mohini episode is depicted in Chemmanthitta Mahadeva temple. Mohini is a blackskinned damsel in it and Bhasmasura is a whiteskinned invader who came to Siva's territory with Siva's permission and with Siva's blessing .The blessing was that when Bhasmasura touch a person's head that person will turn to ashes.With that boon Bhasmasura wanted to test it frist on Shiva himself.Then Vishnumohini comes as a damsel to protect Shiva and his country from the invader.

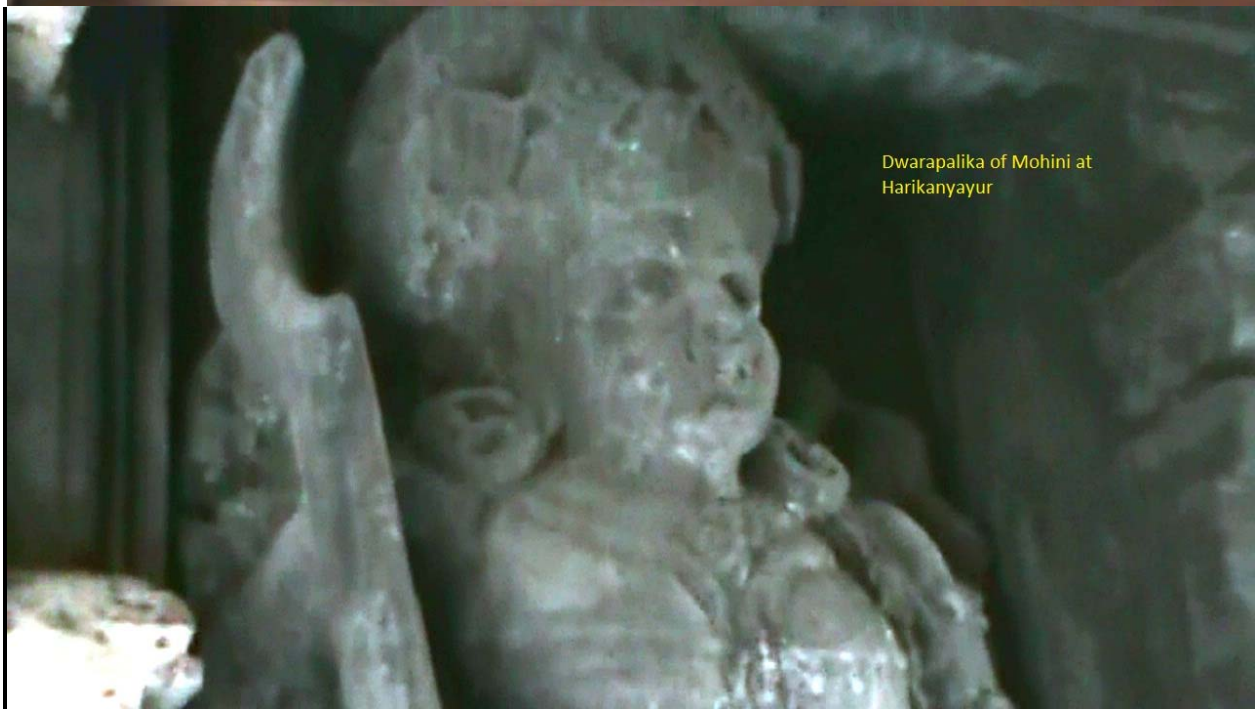
King in sibikam (pallak) carried .Warriors with
shields in defence in front
Naavaamukunda
Nelluvaay
Dancers, people with kuthuvilakk

Asura dancers in palazhimathanam panel Nelluvay

Indrolsavam/Chandrolsavam Vatakkunnaathan

Devadasi in Sibikam with her troupe

Vatakkunnaathan



Dwarapalika of Mohini at Harikanyayur

Chemmanthitta
Mohini's attendant with sword

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Oorakam Amma Thituvati with
sword and Chilamp

Durga Mahishasuramardhini

Mahishasuramardhini Durga Thrissileri Wynad

Thripuranthaka at
Thuprangod facing south

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Attendant of Devi show
Panchapucha mudra

Devi as Guru to Rishis (Vyakhyanamudra)
Foolish Bhasmasura with his monkey mind desires Devi

When Devi rejects him,Bhasmasura's wrath

Mohini playfully in defence against
Bhasmasura's wrath

The arrows cross as swasthika

When Devi's pushpabana reach Bhasmasura , in that sammohana his srIngarabhaava

Devi pretends that she is afraid of him
(feigning fear)

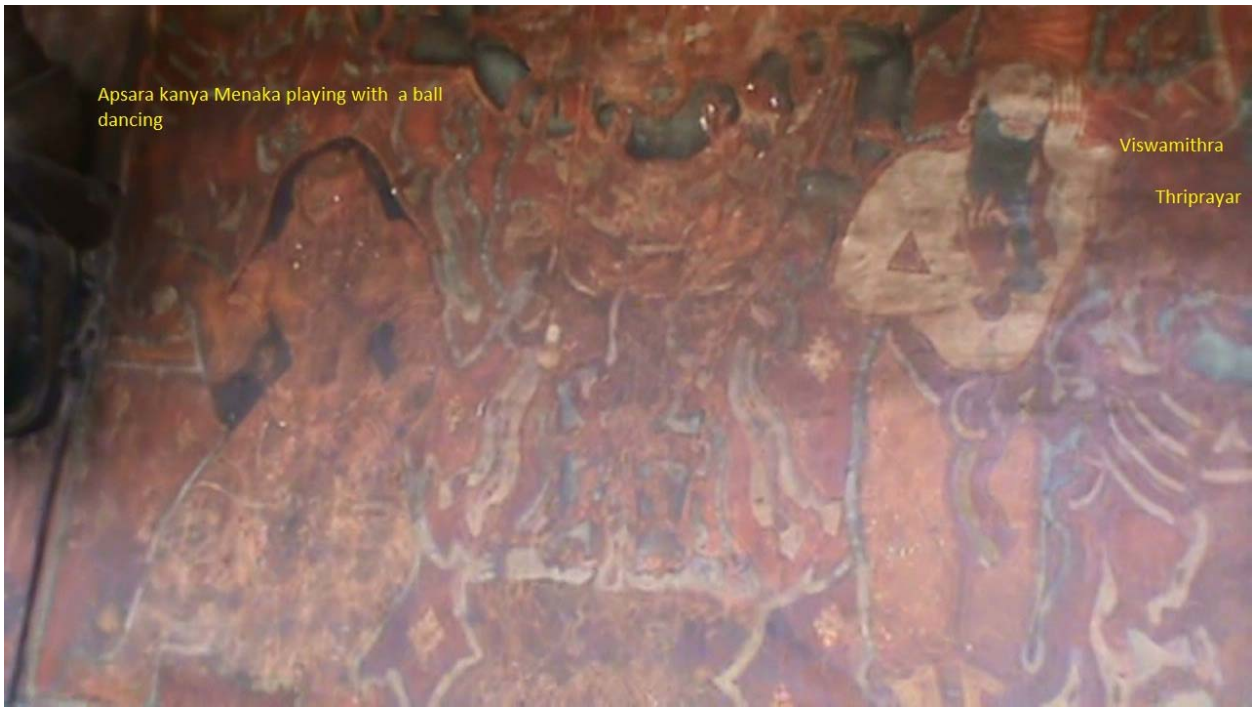
Devi enacts fear

In dance competition Devi touch her head
Lalatathilaka

Bhasmasura imitates her

He is turned into ashes by that gesture

The white man Bhasmasura is mighty. The black woman Mohini , escapes him by her sheer wits and protects her Nation by her beauty
This is what Cleopatra tried to achieve , but failed with Roman invaders
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
An old whiteskinned emperor and his black wife


Apsara kanya Menaka playing with a ball dancing
Viswamithra
Thriprayar

Mrithyunjaya story chemmanthitta

Kaala approaches with Danda.Markandeya embrace Sivalimga

Markandeya and Yama with Paasam at Nankulam
Dr suvarna Nalapat Trust

Saasthaa temple
Naankulam

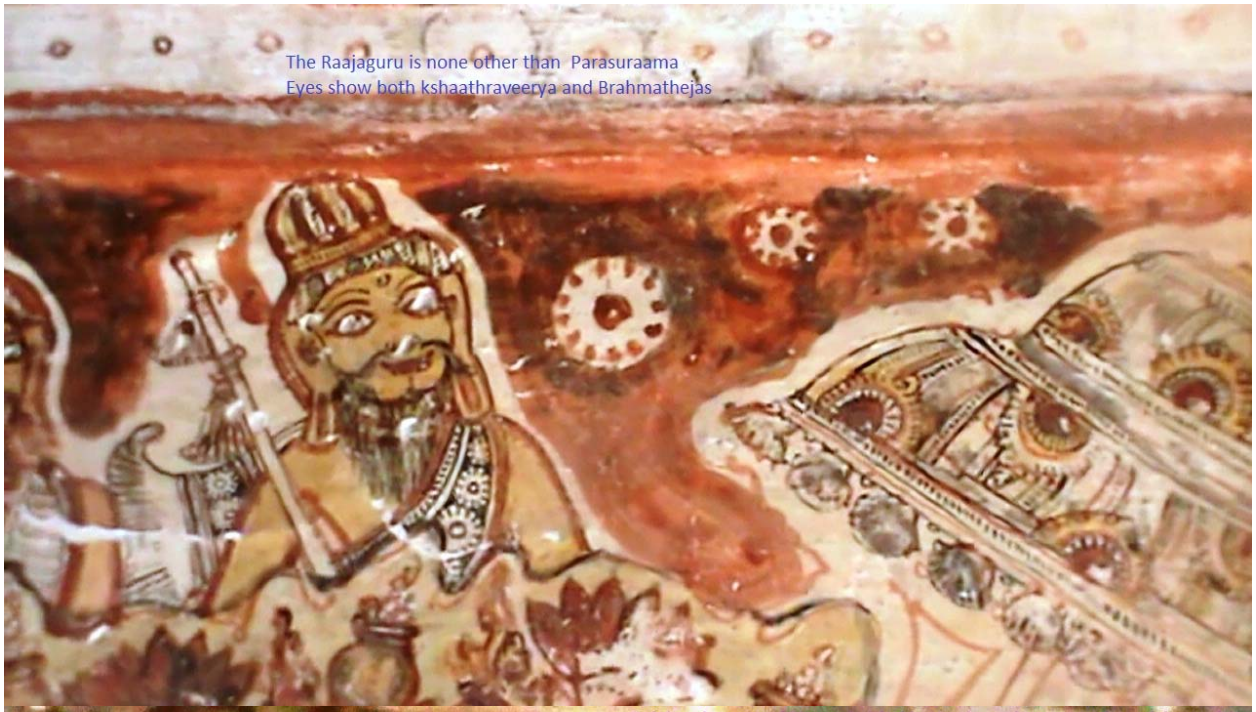
Kiraatha (Vettakkorumakan) with arrow goes for Pallivetta , a rite for Ulsava

Naankulam Saasthaa temple

The Varaaham (Panni) for which Kiraatha hunts at Pallivetta

Varaaham(panni) is taken by people in a procession .Saastha temple Naankulam

Raajaguru has elongated earlobes, aalavattam and the royal Chathra(umbrella/Kuda) are shown in the Pallivetta procession Naankulam Saasthaa temple



The Raajaguru is none other than Parasuraama
Eyes show both kshaathraveerya and Brahmathejas

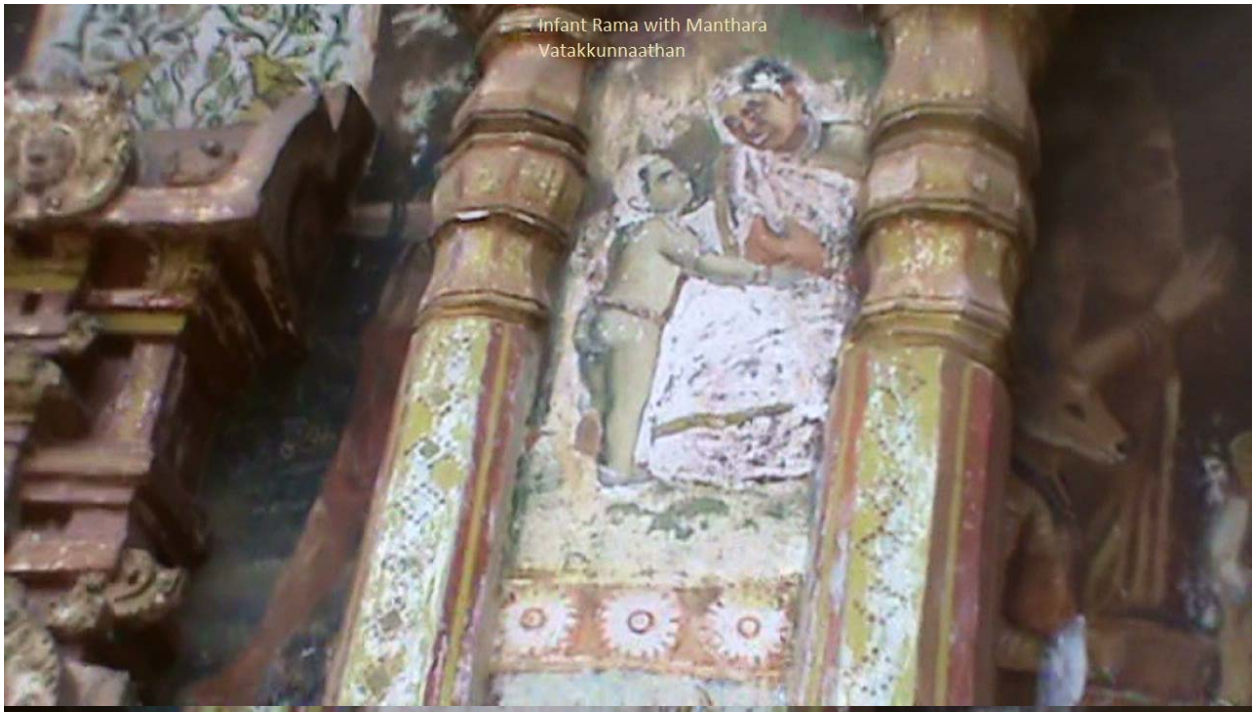
Balakandam panel Thrumkaithakkotta show dancers and musicians with Kerala traditional style dress

Rishyasringa gives paayasam
to Dasaratha
Dasaratha and his three queens receiving paayasam from the King

Raamaavathaaram Dasaratha's queens delivering their children

Kousalya delivers Rama

Thriprayar Raamaavatharam



Infant Rama with Manthara
Vatakkunnaathan

Rama as Infant
Vatakkunnaathan

Pallivetta (Mrigaya) of the princes. On the panel above is shown a chariot

Different karanas in day to day life

Dasaratha, his three queens and adolescent children

Four sons of Dasaratha

the sabha of scholars receives Viswamithra

Thriprayar Thaatakaavadham

Bharatham is Iyal isai and naatakam.Drama includes nrityanatya and abhinaya.Note how closely the iconographist brings out bhaava of each participant in posture, and on facial expression
In this respect Karana of day to day life depicted in Kerala temple is more in tune with Bharathakala of Bharathamuni as a stage show of Drama.

Thaatakaavadham
Ahalyamoksham
Thriprayar
Seethaaswayamvaram

Swayamvaram

Crossing the sarayu in a boat

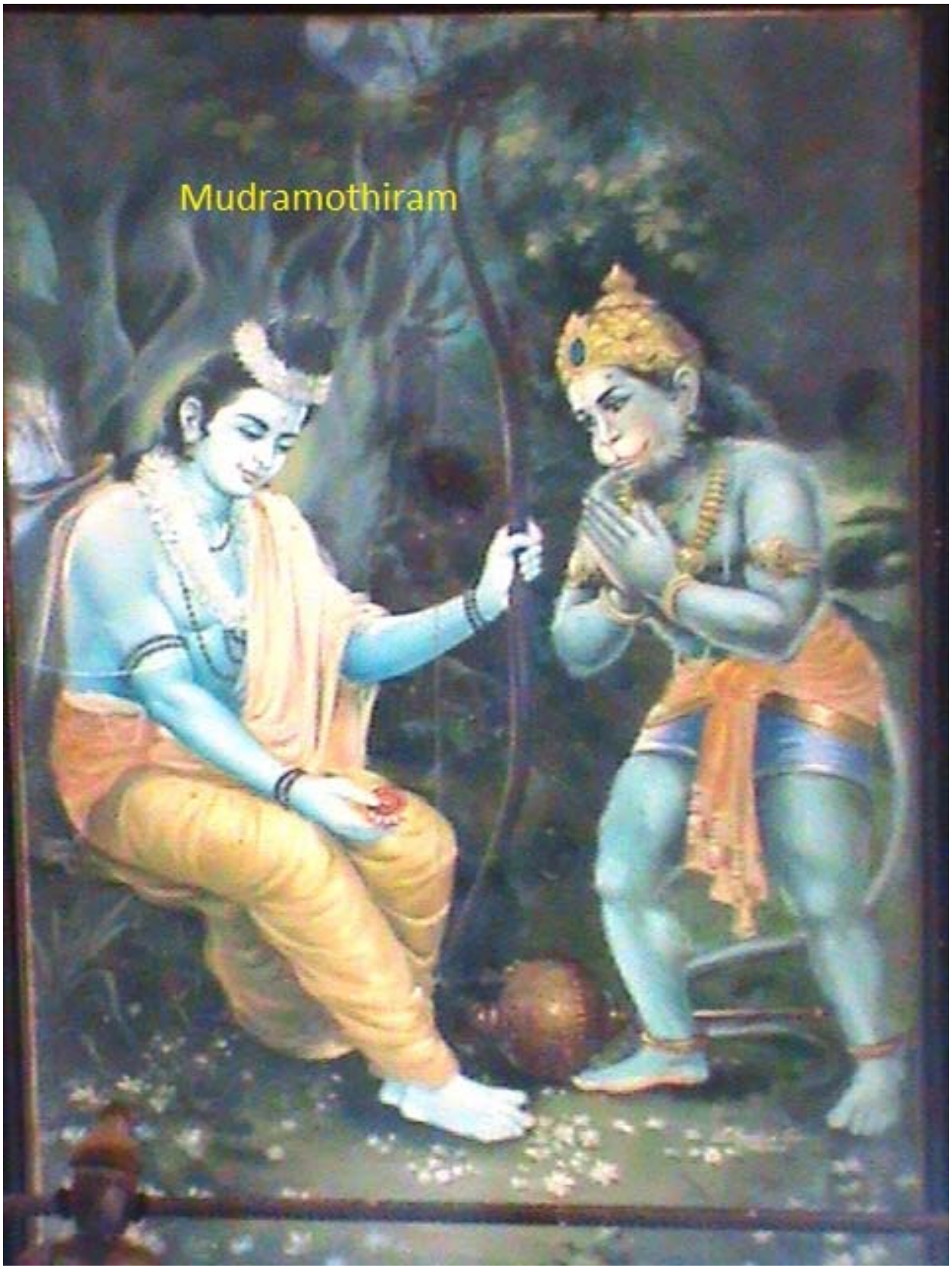
Paanigrahanam
Vanavasam

Rishis of the forest welcomingthe prince

Ravana Thriprayar

Thriprayar

Thriprayar Ravana with
all war equipments


Mudramothiram

Thriprayar Anger at Varunadeva

Hanuman Thriprayar

Krishna, Balarama with Elephant Kuvalayapeetham

Musical instruments Players are kirathas .Note the dress

Dancers in various karana Koothambalam Vatakkunnaathan

Shrine for Mohini as Upadevatha at Kulasekharapuram Srikrishna Temple
Mohini the female incarnation of Vishnu is venerated as main deity at Harikanyayur, as a upadevatha in Kulasekharapuram and as mother of Ayyappa at Sabarimala. She has a special place in Natyasasthra as originator of Kaisikivrithi and Kerala is the birthplace of Mohini/kaisikivrithi (from Paalkkatal/milky ocean)

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sopana of mohini shrine show figures possibly celestial nymphs

sopanam of Nandagopar shrine
Dancers and musicians
.Kulasekharapuram Srikrishna temple Kodungalloor

Musicians Sopanam of Nandagopar shrine
Kulasekharapuram Srikrishna
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Musician and dancer sopanam of
Nandagopa shrine kulasekharapuram
srikrishna temple Kodungalloor

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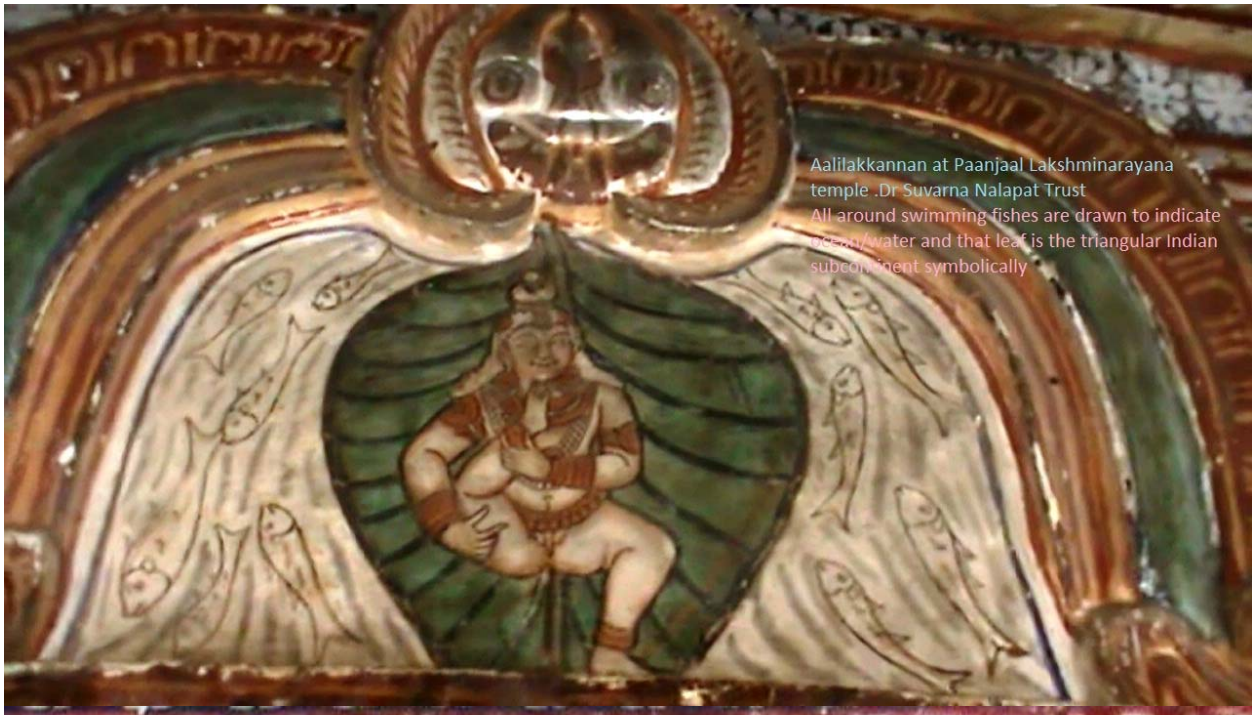
Krishnavathara

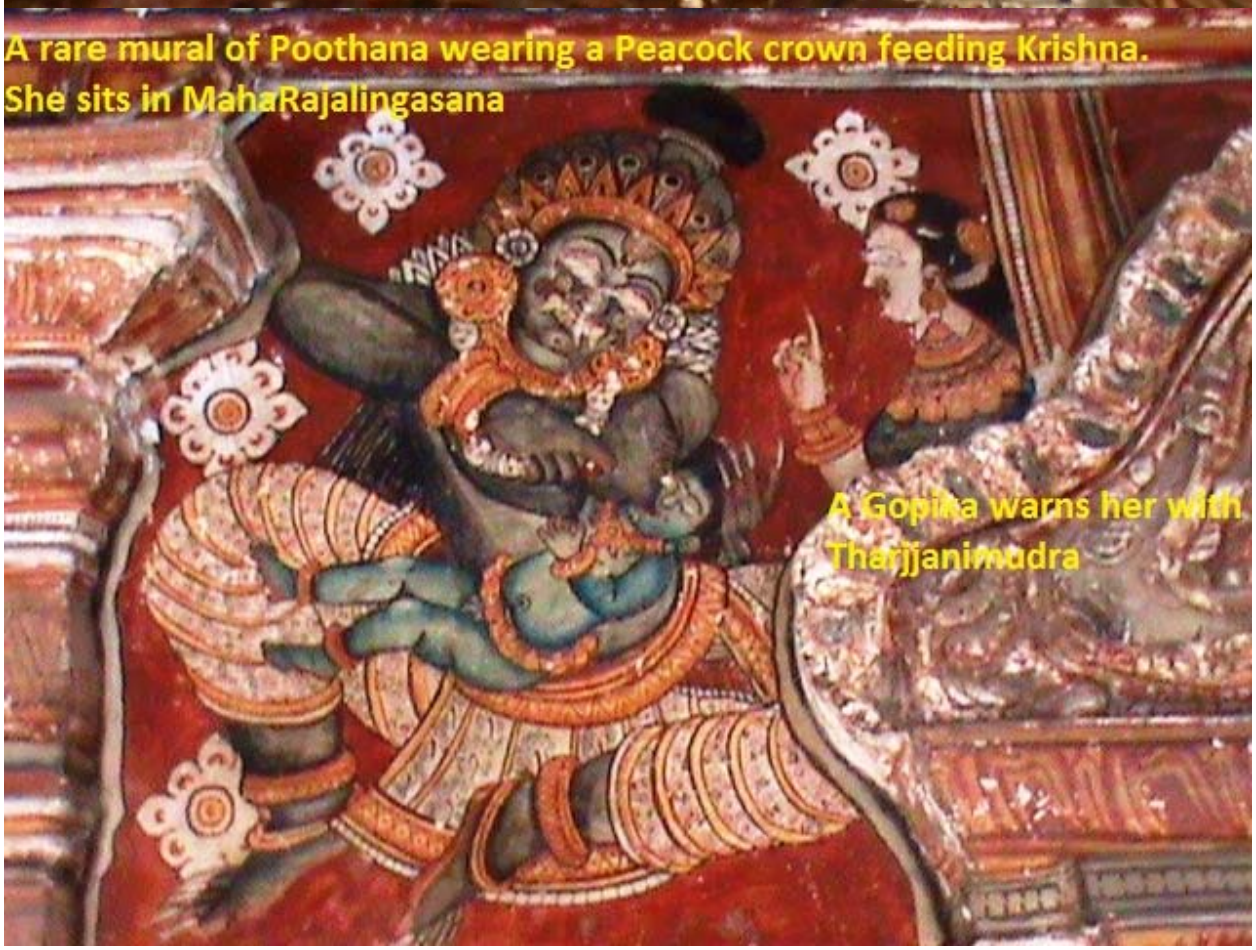
Thanks to the Cochin Devaswam Board , ASI, Zamorin of Calicut and Malabar Devaswam Board for permitting to do the Research
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Vennakkannan at Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple

Floral designs , Krishna with butter in Right hand and Katihastha of left hand
Laaloor Karthyayani temple is famous for getting Progeny.

Thriprayar



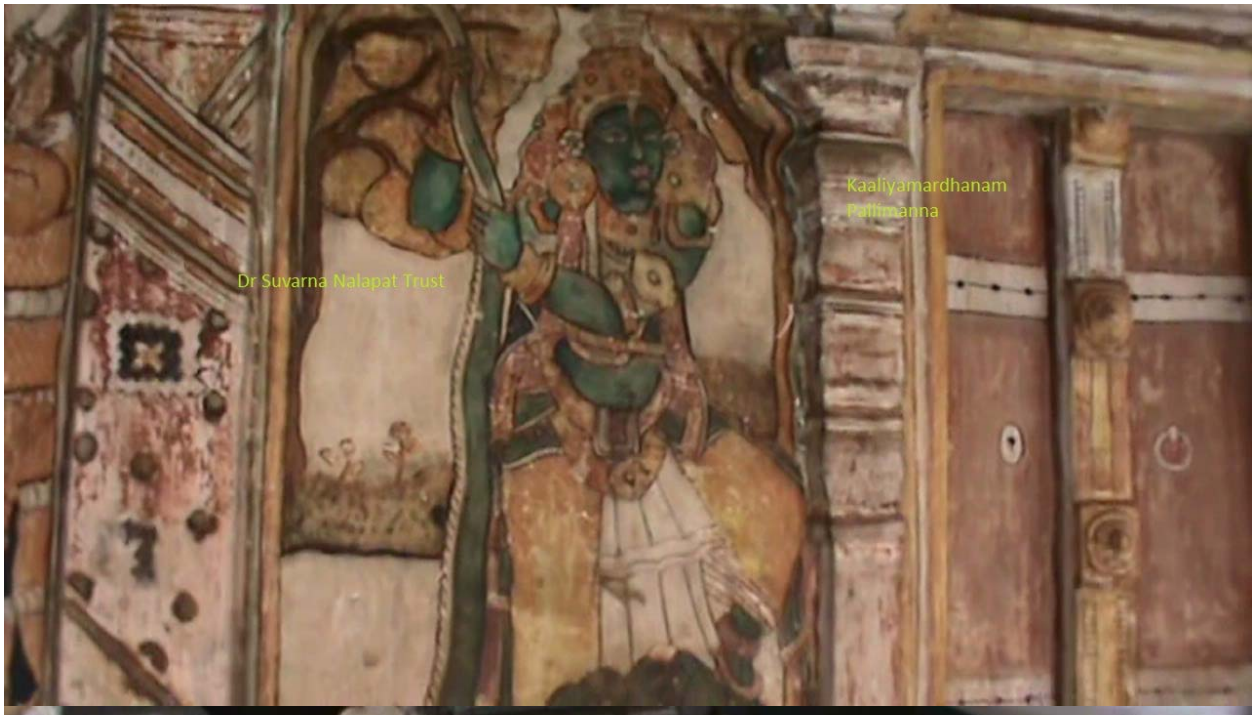
Aalilakkannan at Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple .Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
All around swimming fishes are drawn to indicate ocean/water and that leaf is the triangular Indian subcontinent symbolically


A rare mural of Poothana wearing a Peacock crown feeding Krishna.
She sits in MahaRajalingasana
A Gopika warns her with Tharjjanimudra

Krishna at Pallimanna Siva temple
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Krishna Pallimanna siva temple
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

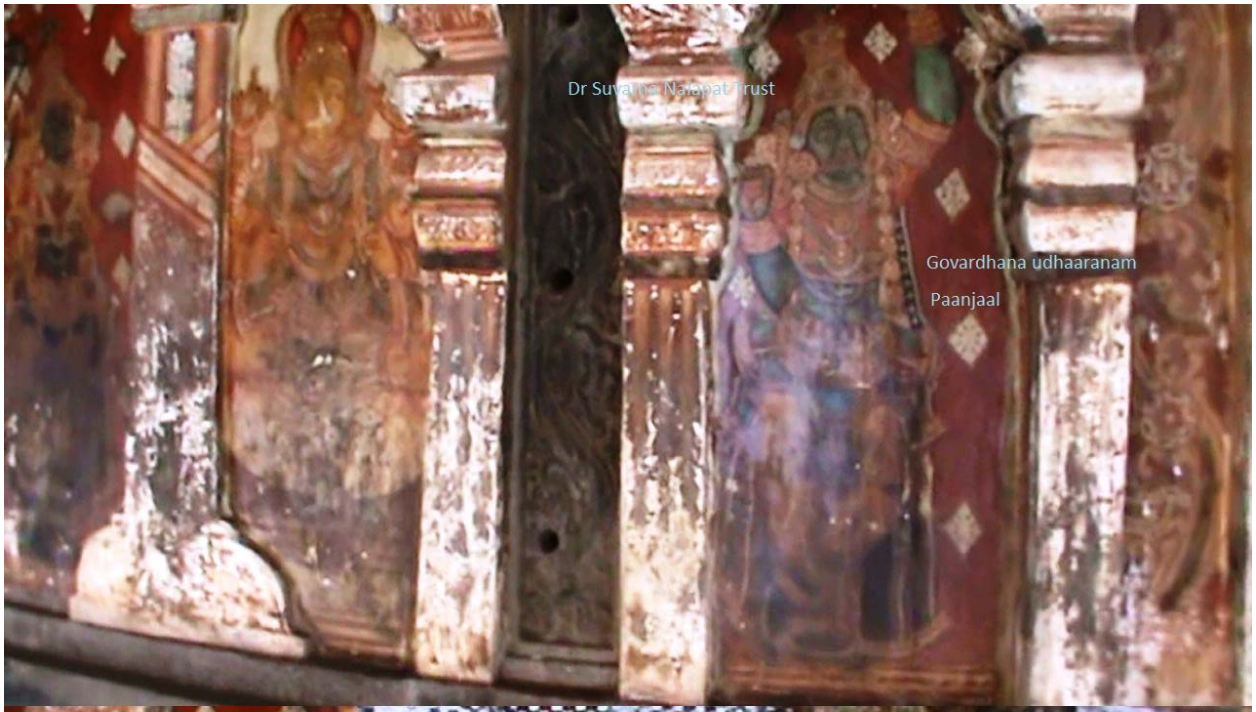
Krishna at Thuprangot


Kaaliyamardhanam
Pallimanna
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Nelluvaay Dhanwanthari Kaaliyamardhana Krishna and
the Naagapathni on either side
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Oorakam
Kaaliyamardhana Krishna
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Kaaliyamardhana Krishna

Venugopaala at oorakam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust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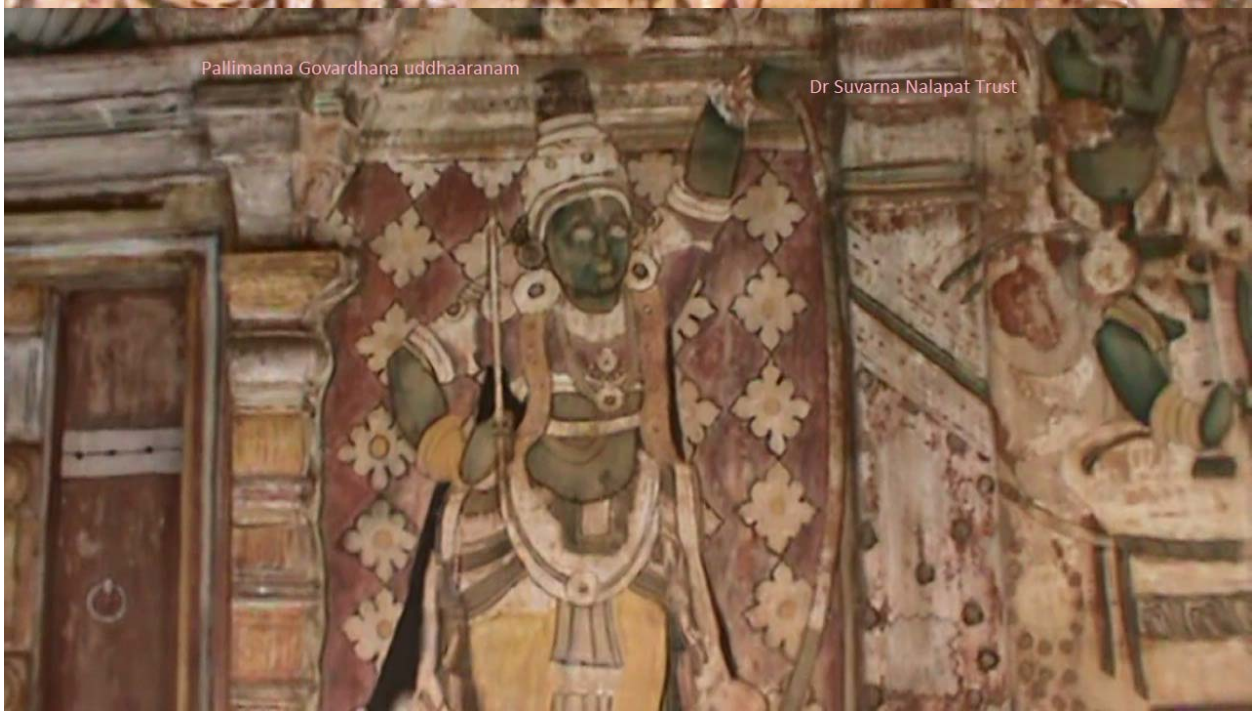
Govardhana udhaaranam
Paanjaal

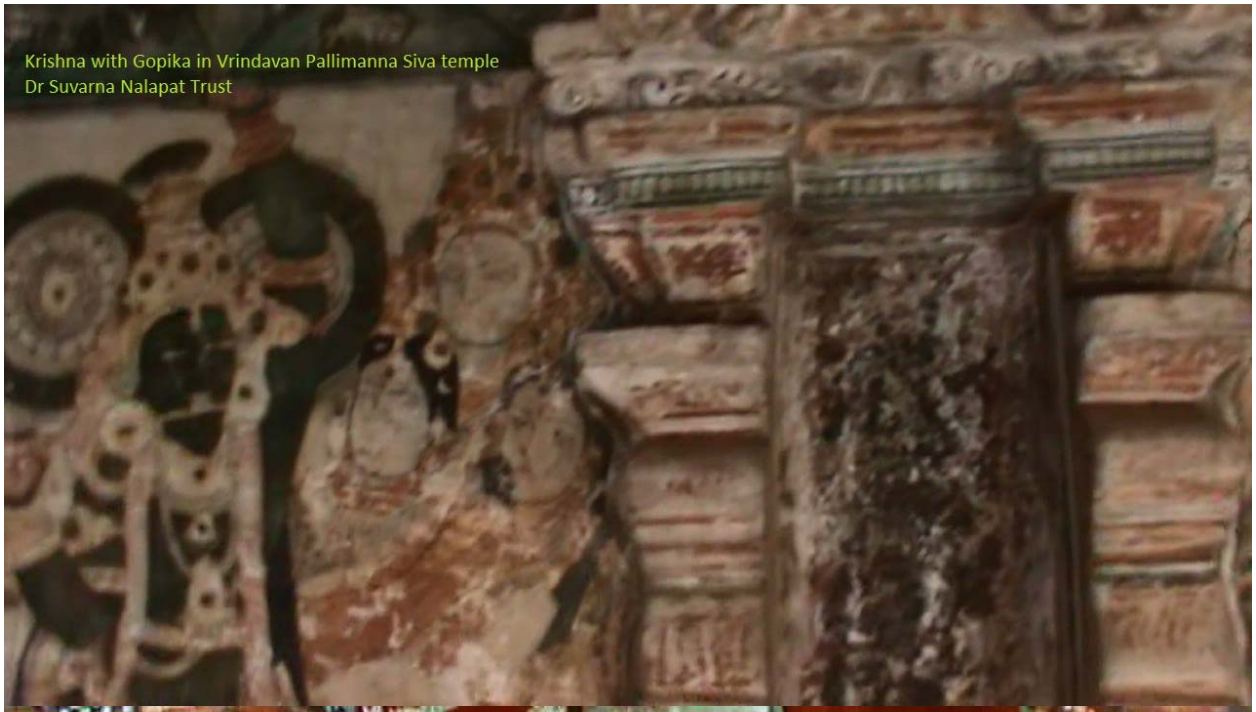
On govardhana hill
animals drawn

Vatakkunnaathan Rishabha shrine has older murals than the main shrine



Pallimanna Govardhana uddhaaranam

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust



Krishna with Gopika in Vrindavan Pallimanna Siva temple
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Panjaal Lakshmi Narayana Temple

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

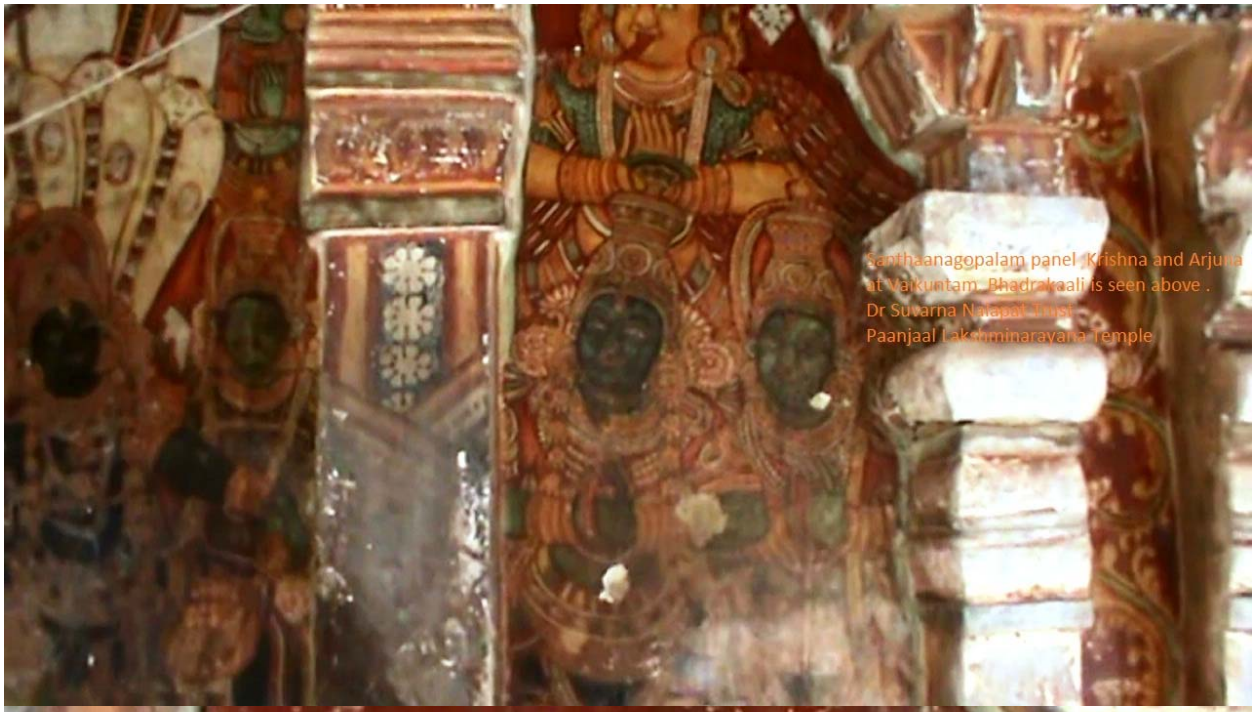
Krishna with butter in left hand and kaalikkol in right

Vrindavana Krishna
Pallimanna siva temple
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

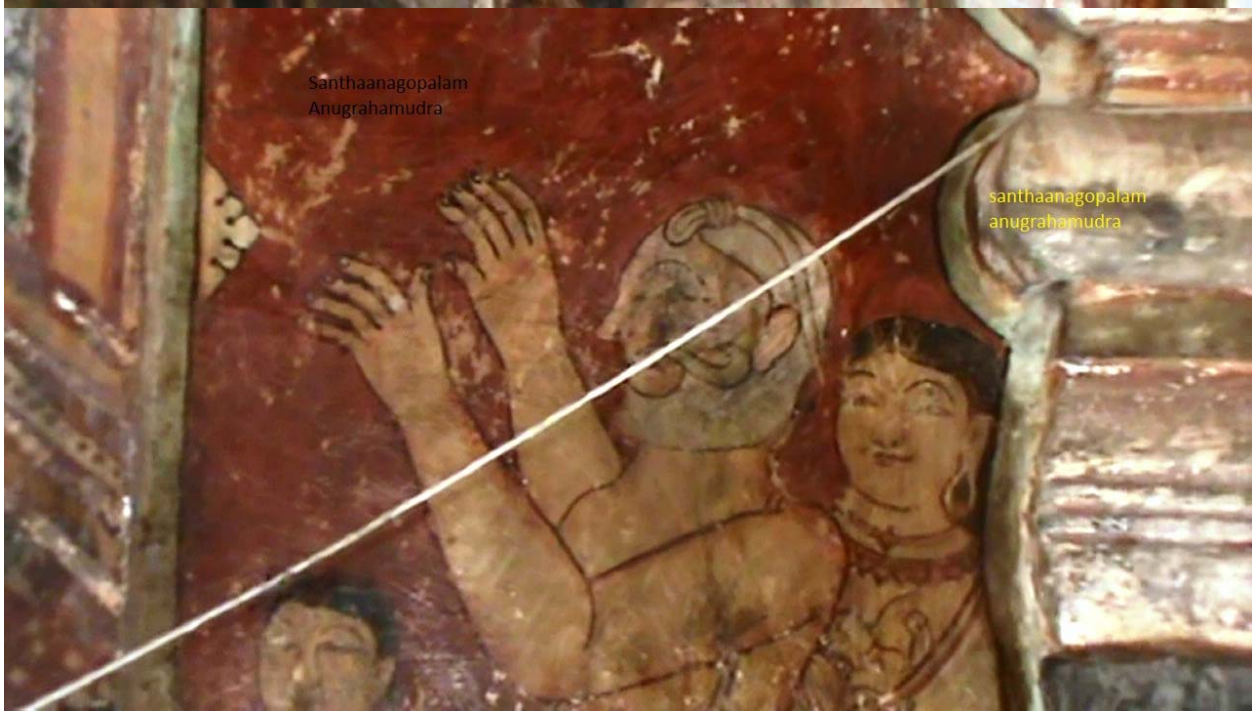
Palliyara Mural Thiruvanchikkulam

Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Krishna
Balarama

Santhaana Gopaalam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Paanjaal Lakshmi
Narayana Temple



Santhaanagopalam panel .Krishna and Arjuna at Vaikuntam .Bhadrakaali is seen above .
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Paanjaal Lakshminarayana Temple



Santhaanagopalam
Anugrahamudra

santhaanagopalam
anugrahamudra

Krishna hurls sudarsana at Bheeshma . Prayoga of
Kartharimukha

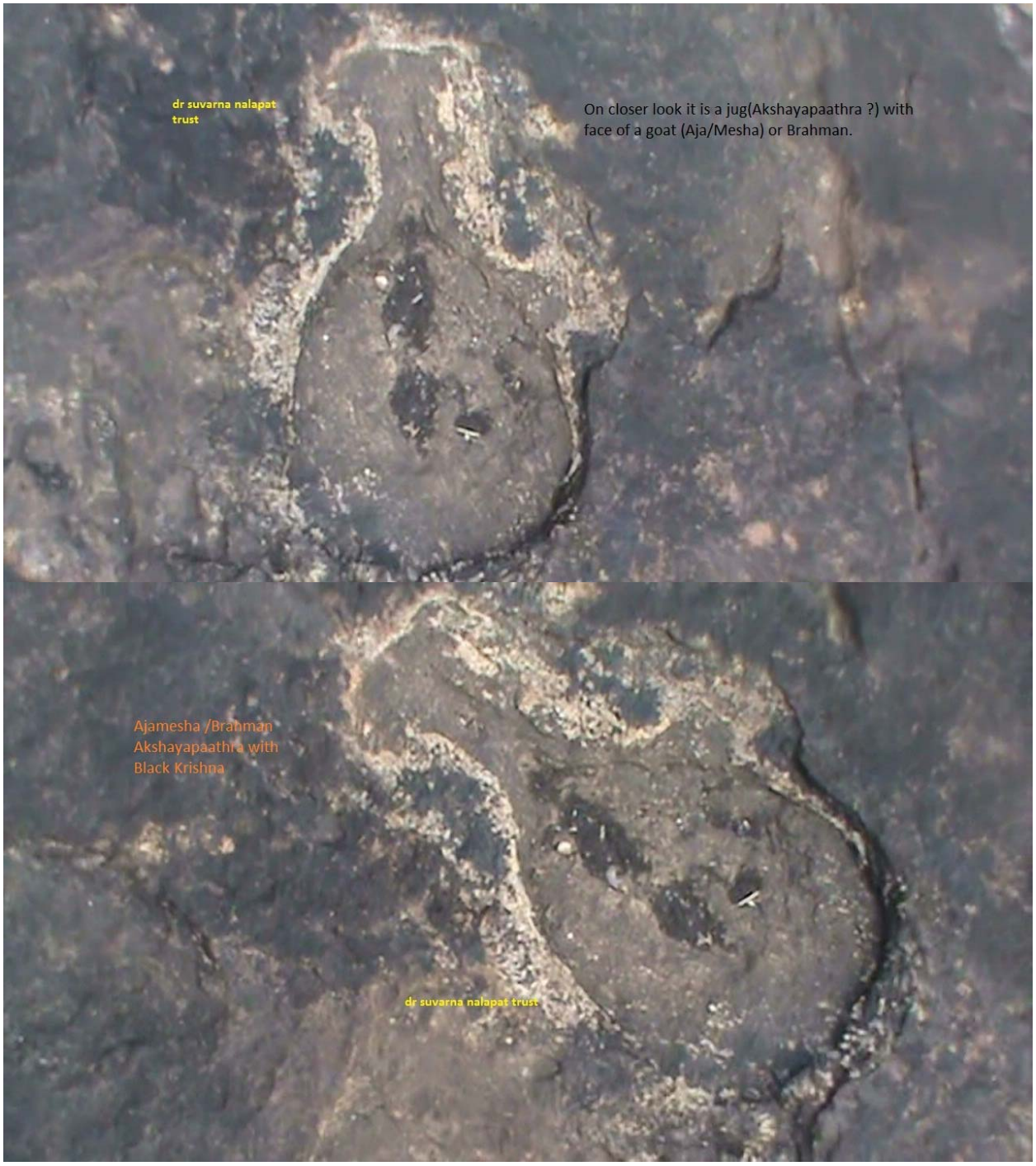
Maniyamkottappan
Wynad

Krishna as charioteer Thriprayar

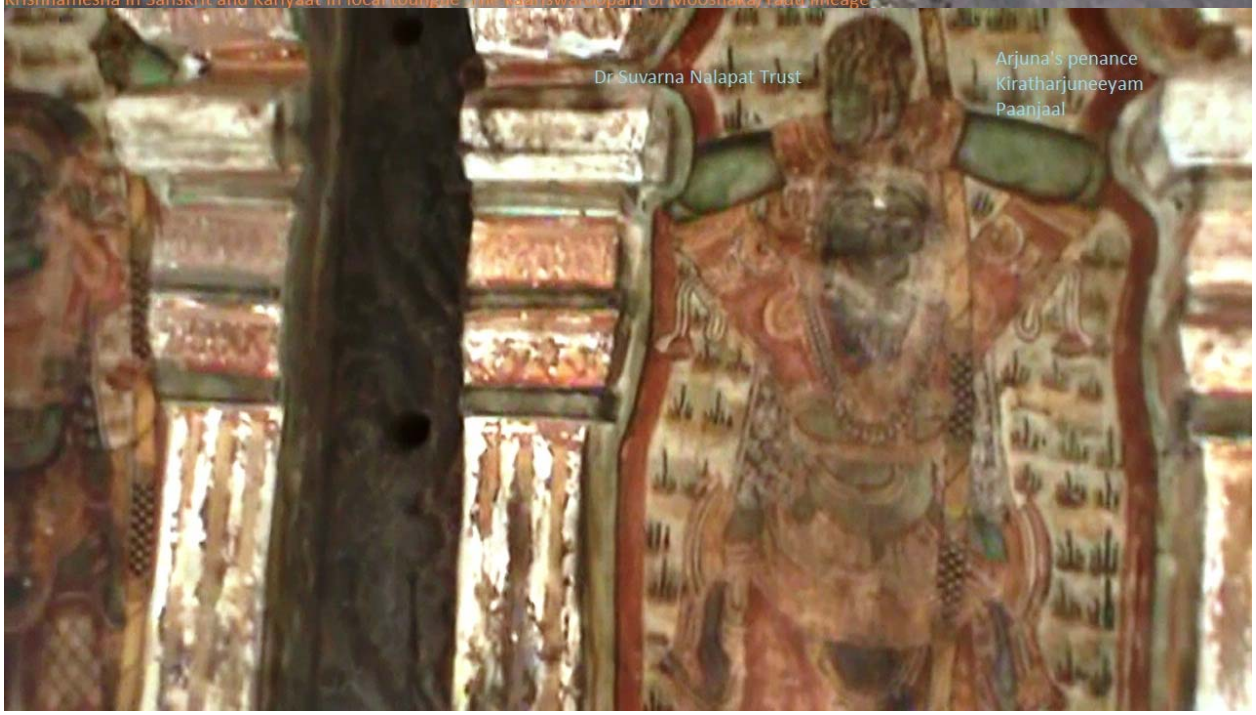
Thriprayar

The subaltern Krishna of a nation of cave dwellers
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Black man as Krishna , a caveman's carving on a rock surface .Local people think that this was the Vaalkkannaadi (hand mirror) Paanchaali used while she went for a bath


dr suvarna nalapat trust
On closer look it is a jug(Akshayapaathra ?) with face of a goat (Aja/Mesha) or Brahman.
Ajamesha /Brahman Akshayapaathra with Black Krishna
dr suvarna nalapat trust

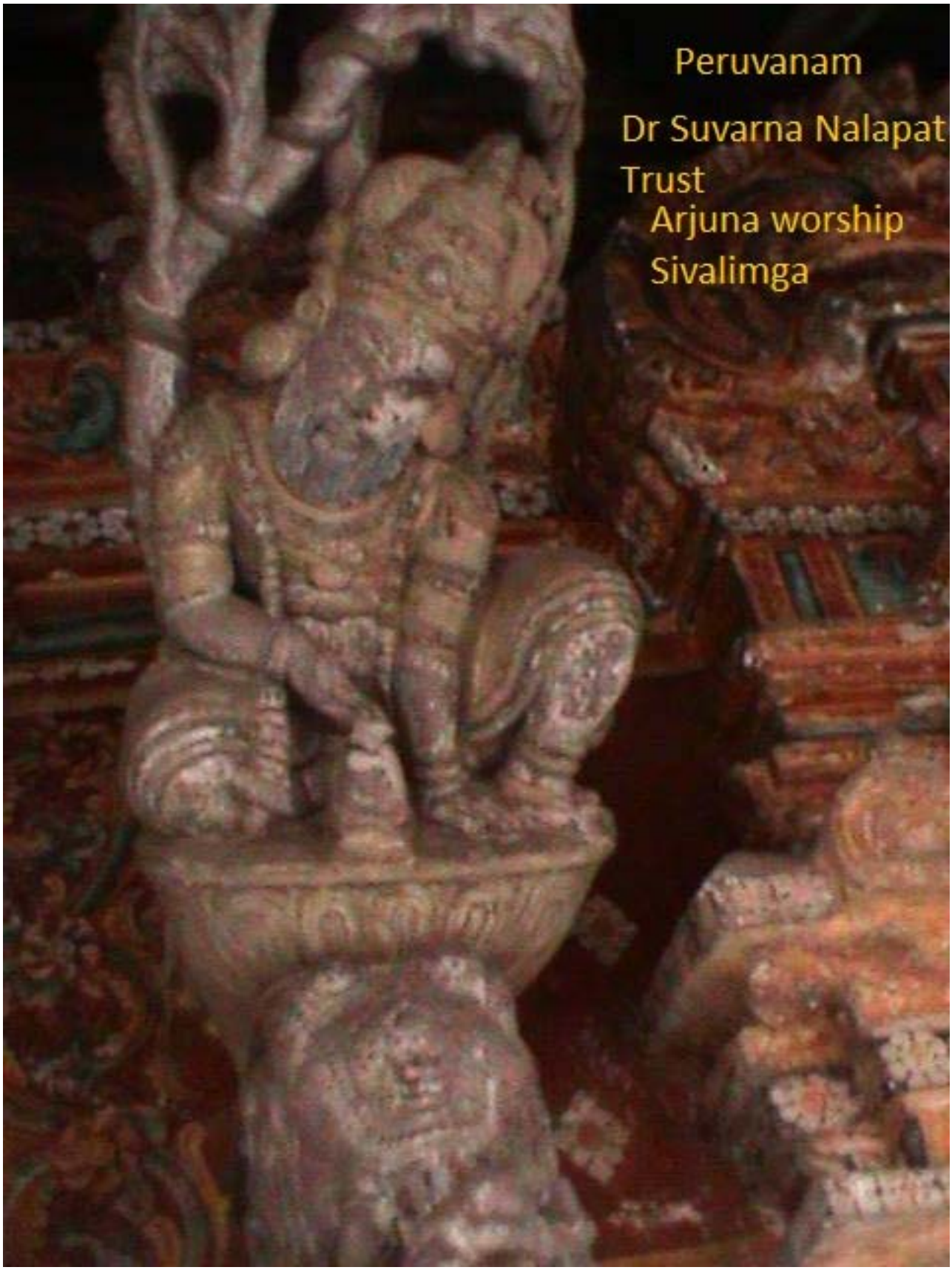
Look at the features closely.The hairdo , the posture of Krishna, expression on the goat(Brahmani) face etc
Krishnamesha in Sanskrit and Kariyaat in local lounguage .The kaaniswaroopam of Mooshaka/Yadu lineage



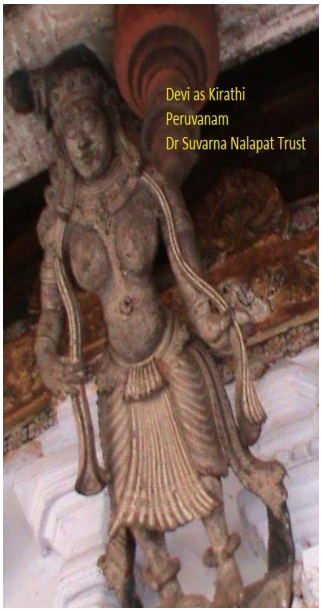
Kiratharjunneeyam Paanjaal
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Combat
Arjuna and Kirathasiva

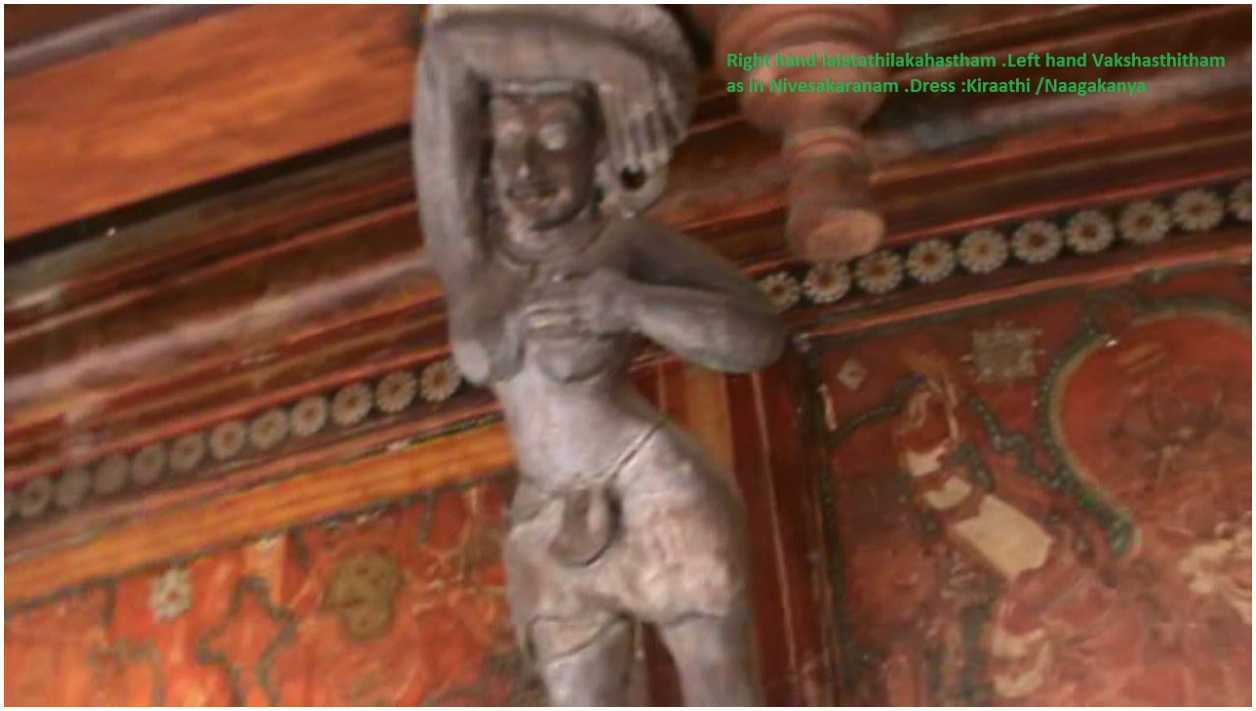
Arjuna offers prayers to
win over Kiratha to Siva.


Peruvanam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat
Trust
Arjuna worship
Sivalimga

Devi
Peruvanam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Devi as Kirathi
Peruvanam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

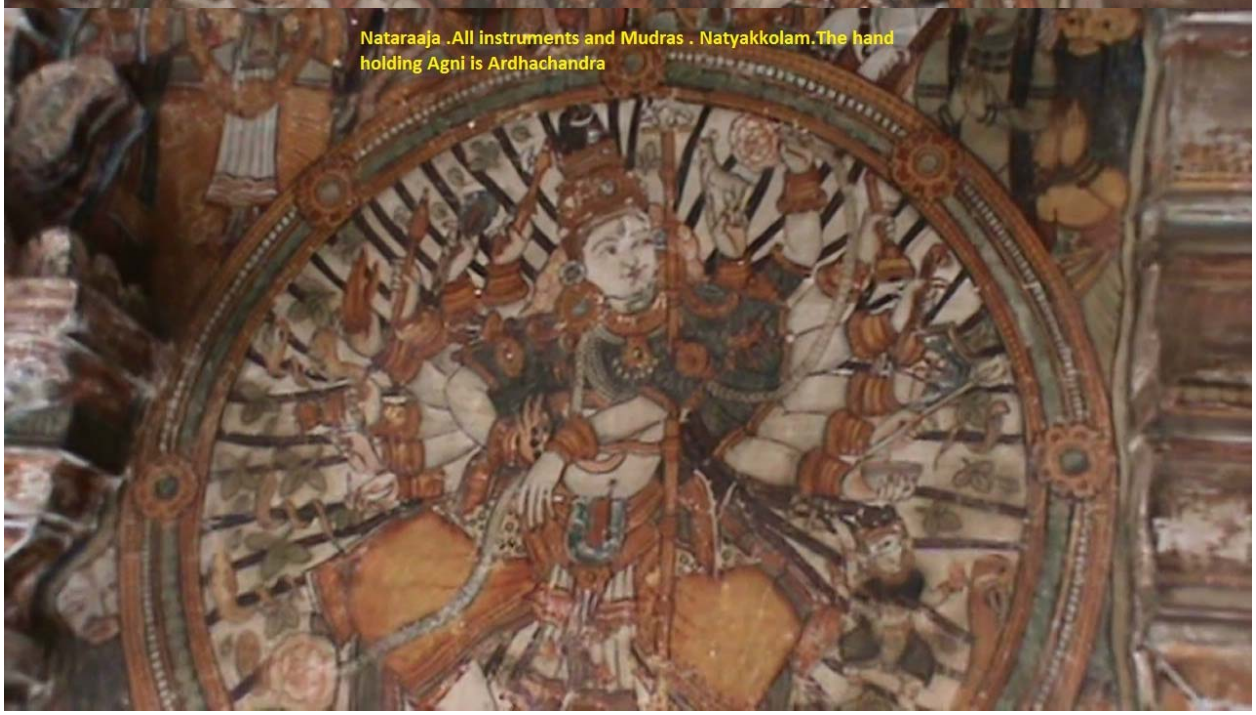
Dwarapala Peruvanam
alapadma
oordwajaanu


Right hand lalatathilakahastham .Left hand Vakshasthitham
as in Nivesakaranam .Dress :Kiraathi /Naagakanya

Siva's eyes and smiling lips show his love and compassion for Arjuna

Siva gives Paasupatha to Arjuna
Paasupatha arrow

Musical instruments
Pallimanna
Pradoshanritham panel



Nataraaja .All instruments and Mudras . Natyakkolam.The hand holding Agni is Ardhachandra

Trefoil sign (Sreevalsa) are strewn in between the instruments. Compare with taht in the dress of IVC chieftain.

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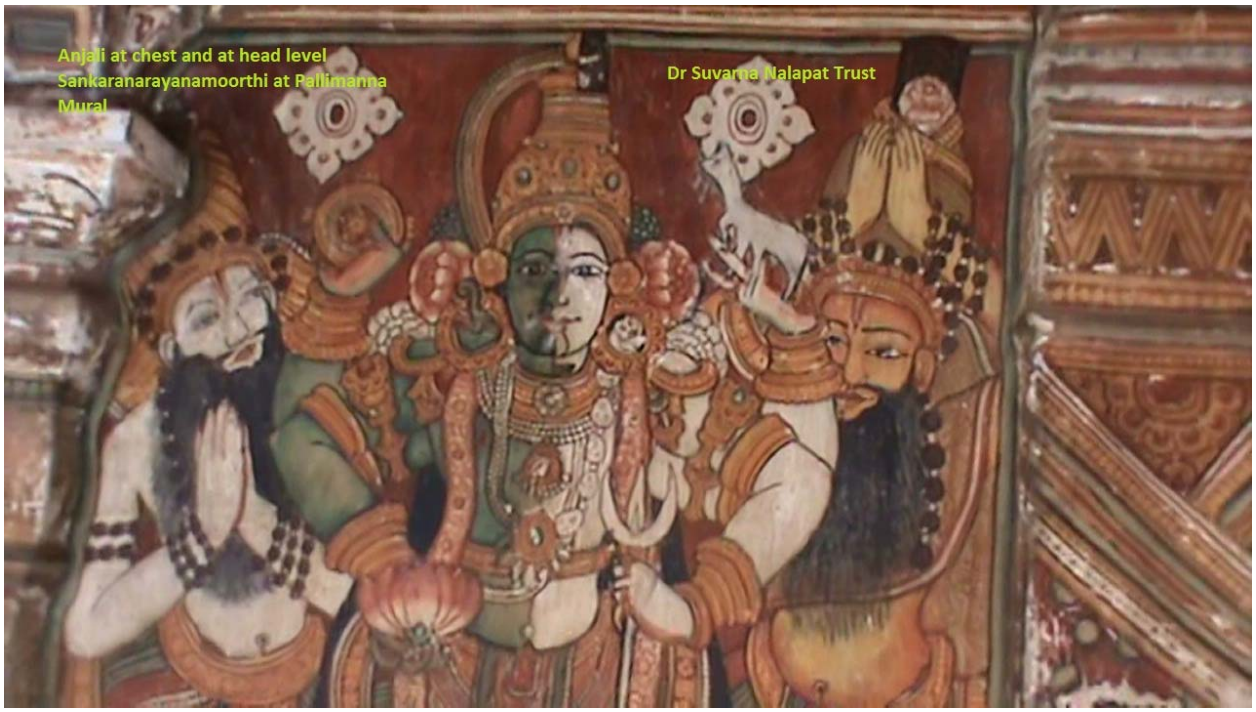
Palliyara Mural Thiruvanchikkulam



Medicine, Music,Dance and Drama as gifts of Praanahamsa/Vaayu/Saraswathi to a meditating Mind :

The same posture and gesture with Poornakumbha by a dancer
Paanjaal Lakshminarayana temple
dr suvarna nalapat trust

Brahmadeva in penance is flanked by Sangeetha,Nrutha and Abhinaya (Bharatham) on one side and Saahithyam on the other
On his right is a beautiful maiden in dancing pose, as if with a veena in hand. Also Saraswathi
Brahma in dhyana
On his left is a Devi with Ezhuthaani and grantha in hand , obviously Saraswathi

People and their King : Day to day karana/vyavahara of people (as well as their Vasantholsava/chandrolsava and sabha procedures) are shown on temples.

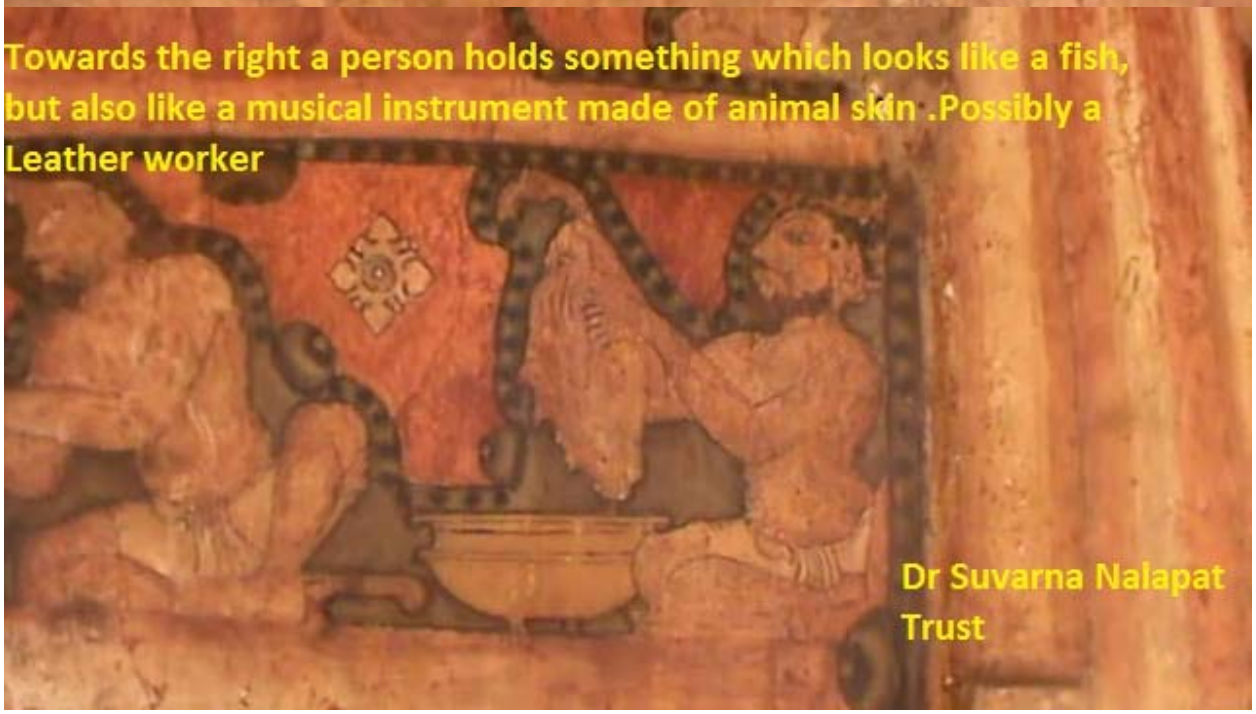
Musical instruments OOrakam

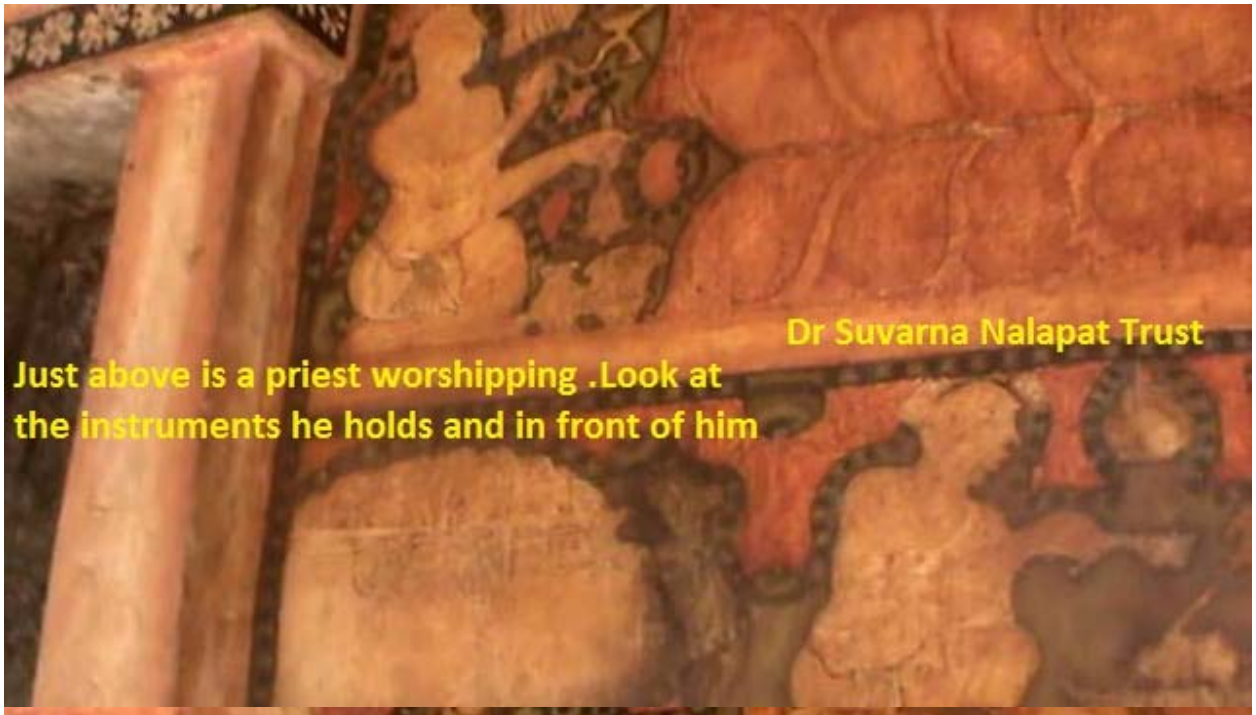
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Man with plough and Musical instruments .Agricultural people and their Music in temples
chemmanthitta

Men using a furnace with fire and a sruk .On left is seen a plate full of white rice, and a Mooshaka eating that

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

In a closer view it looks like smoldering something as by Metal workers


Towards the right a person holds something which looks like a fish, but also like a musical instrument made of animal skin .Possibly a Leather worker
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust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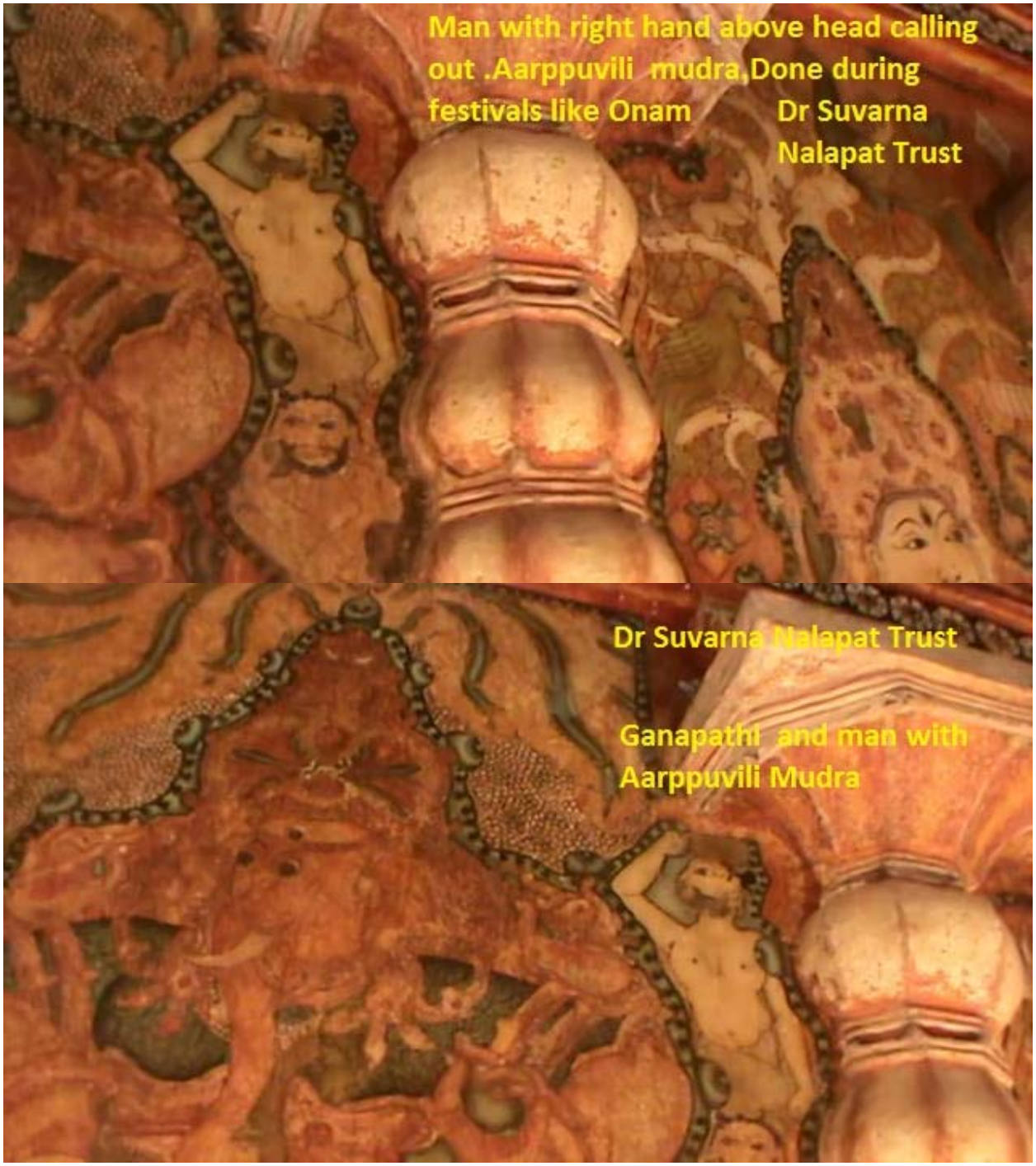
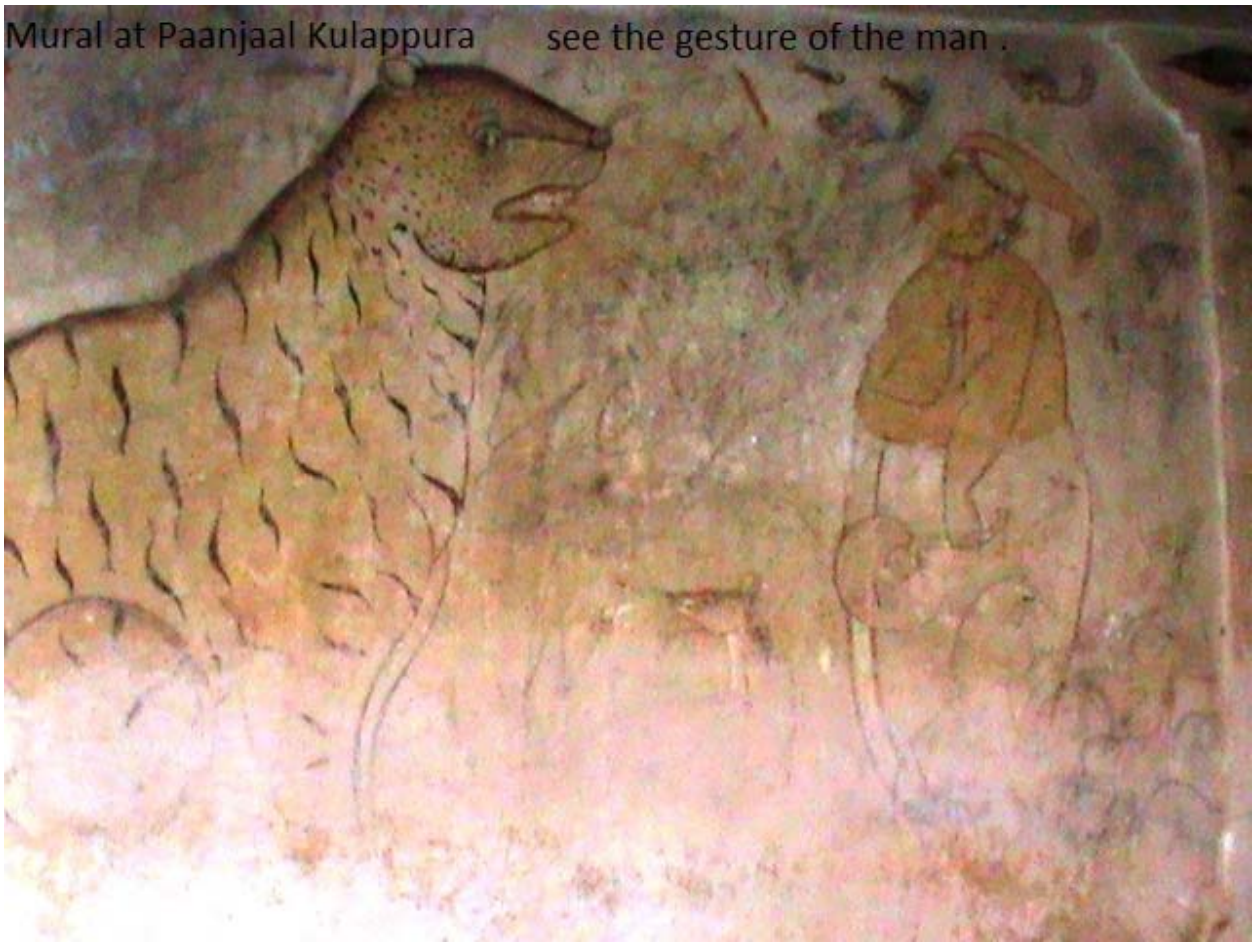
Just above is a priest worshipping .Look at
the instruments he holds and in front of him

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Even the hairdo of priest
is given care by artist
Above worshipping priest a devotee with supplicating
hands, Rat (Mooshaka) of Ganapathi is also seen

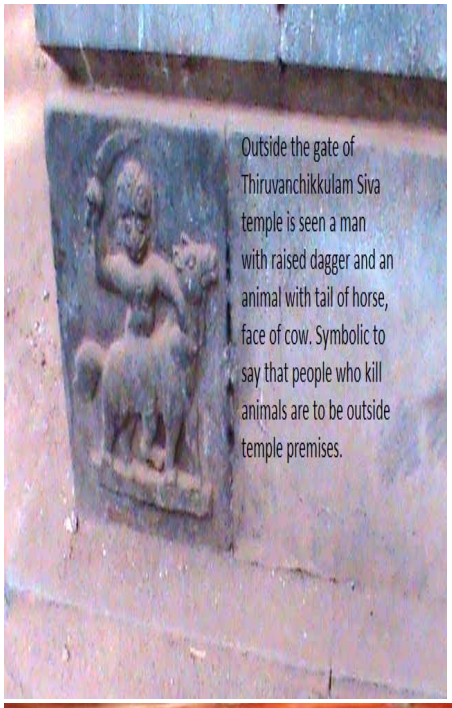
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
A person doing Japa with Mudra Nyasa

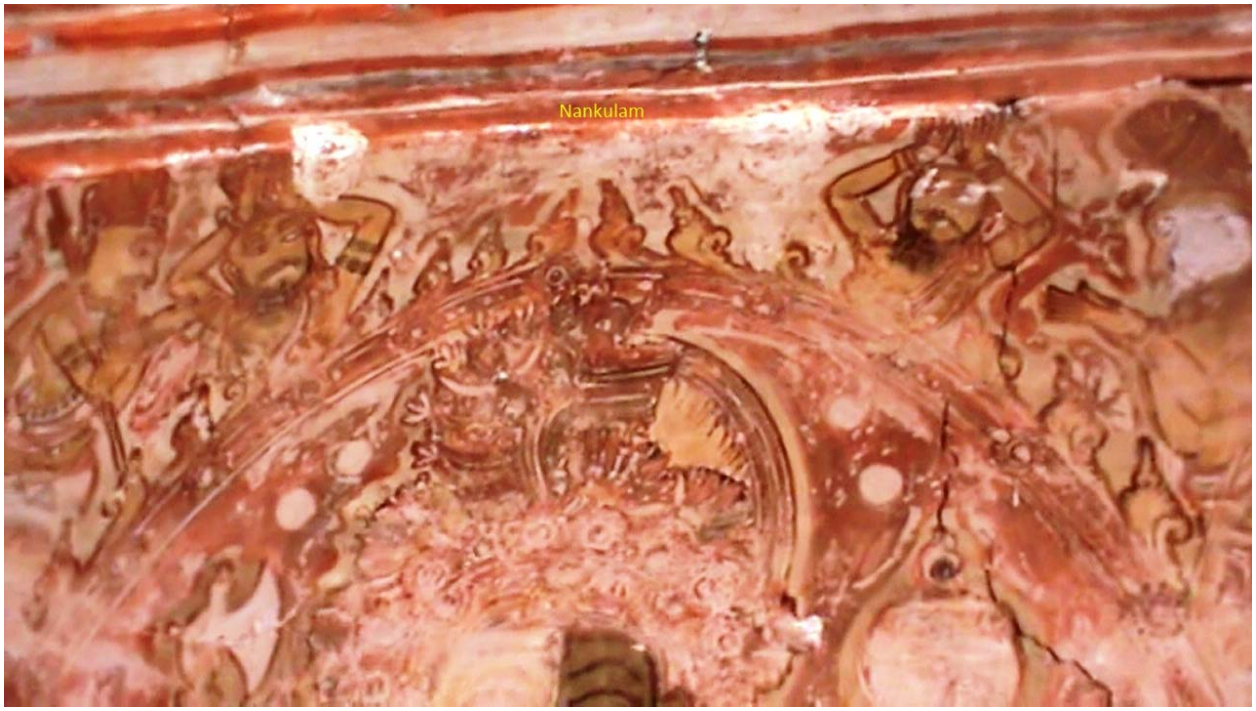
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Above Japa artist touching nose is the one who prostrates before Ganapathi making swasthikahastha and touching ears


Man with right hand above head calling out .Aarppuvili mudra,Done during festivals like Onam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Ganapathi and man with Aarppuvili Mudra


Mural at Paanjaal Kulappura
see the gesture of the man .

Hanuman in Kootalmanikyam
pillar
Compare with the aarppuvili figure at Chemmanthitta


Outside the gate of
Thiruvanchikkulam Siva
temple is seen a man
with raised dagger and an
animal with tail of horse,
face of cow. Symbolic to
say that people who kill
animals are to be outside
temple premises.

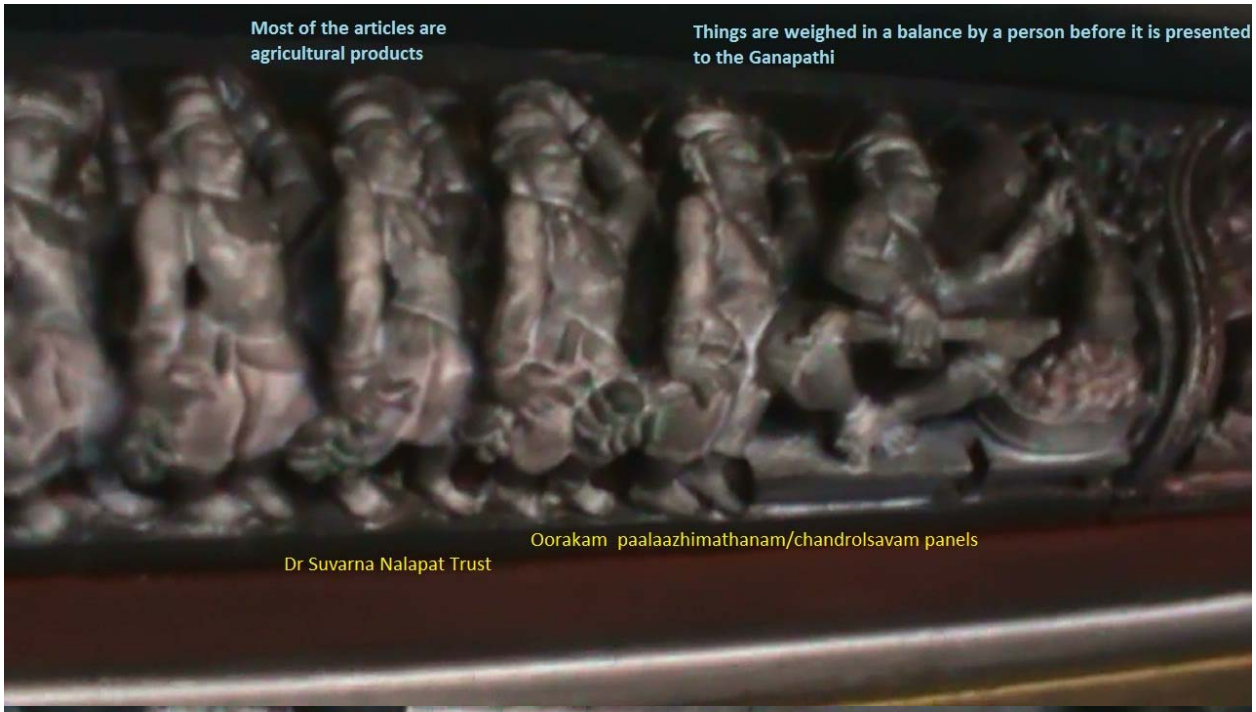

Nankulam

Nankulam People carry plantains (Onam)

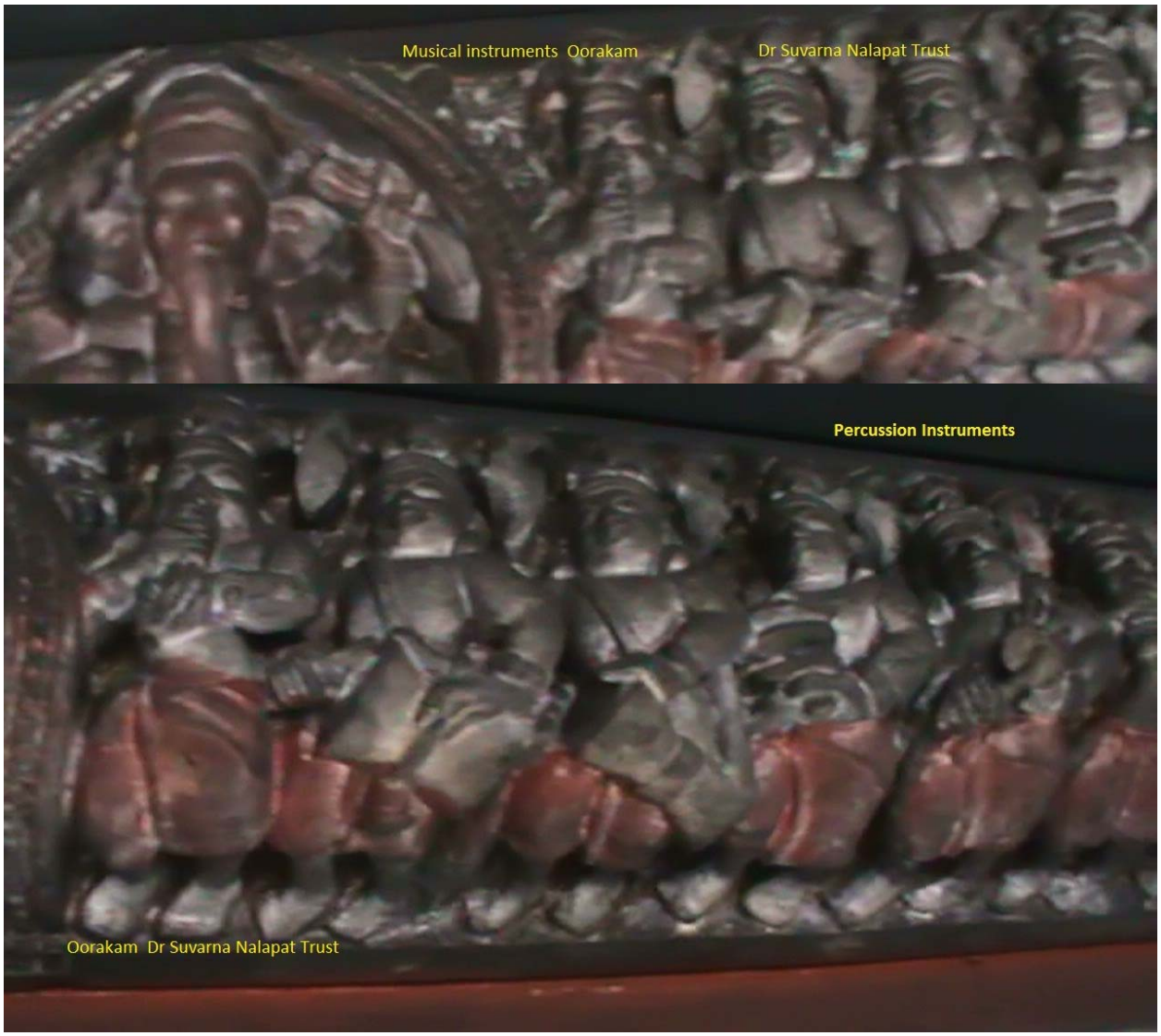
Oorakam ulsavam panel

People carry plantains as Kazhchakkula

Oorakam
People carrying different things on head & in hands march to the Ganapathi -Chief of the Gana or the people
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Oorakam palazhimathanam panel
People marching with their produce to Ganapathi, their Chieftain


Most of the articles are agricultural products
Things are weighed in a balance by a person before it is presented to the Ganapathi
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Oorakam paalaazhimathanam/chandrolsavam panels


Musical instruments Oorakam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Percussion Instruments
Oorakam Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Musical instruments
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Oorakam

The army
Oorakam Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Oorakam
Manthara mountain in milky ocean .Paalaazhimathana panel shows all the processions, shown above with agricultural products, music,dance etc. The Sri or wealth of our country .
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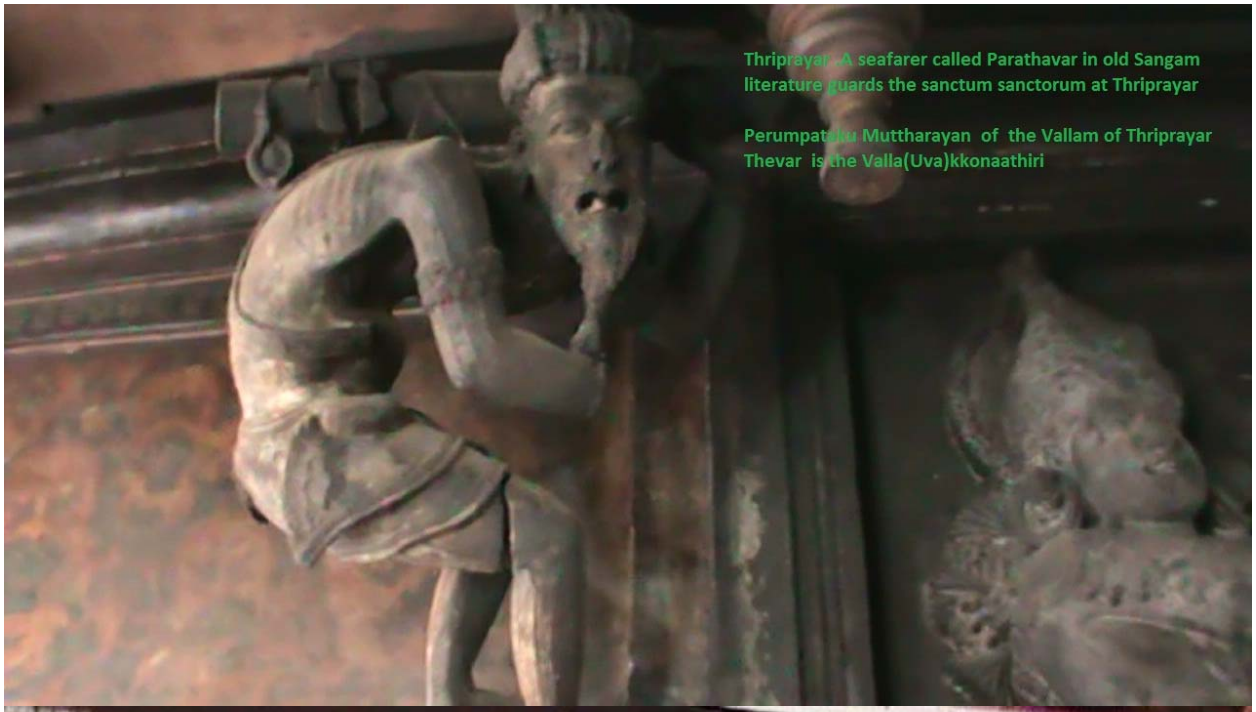
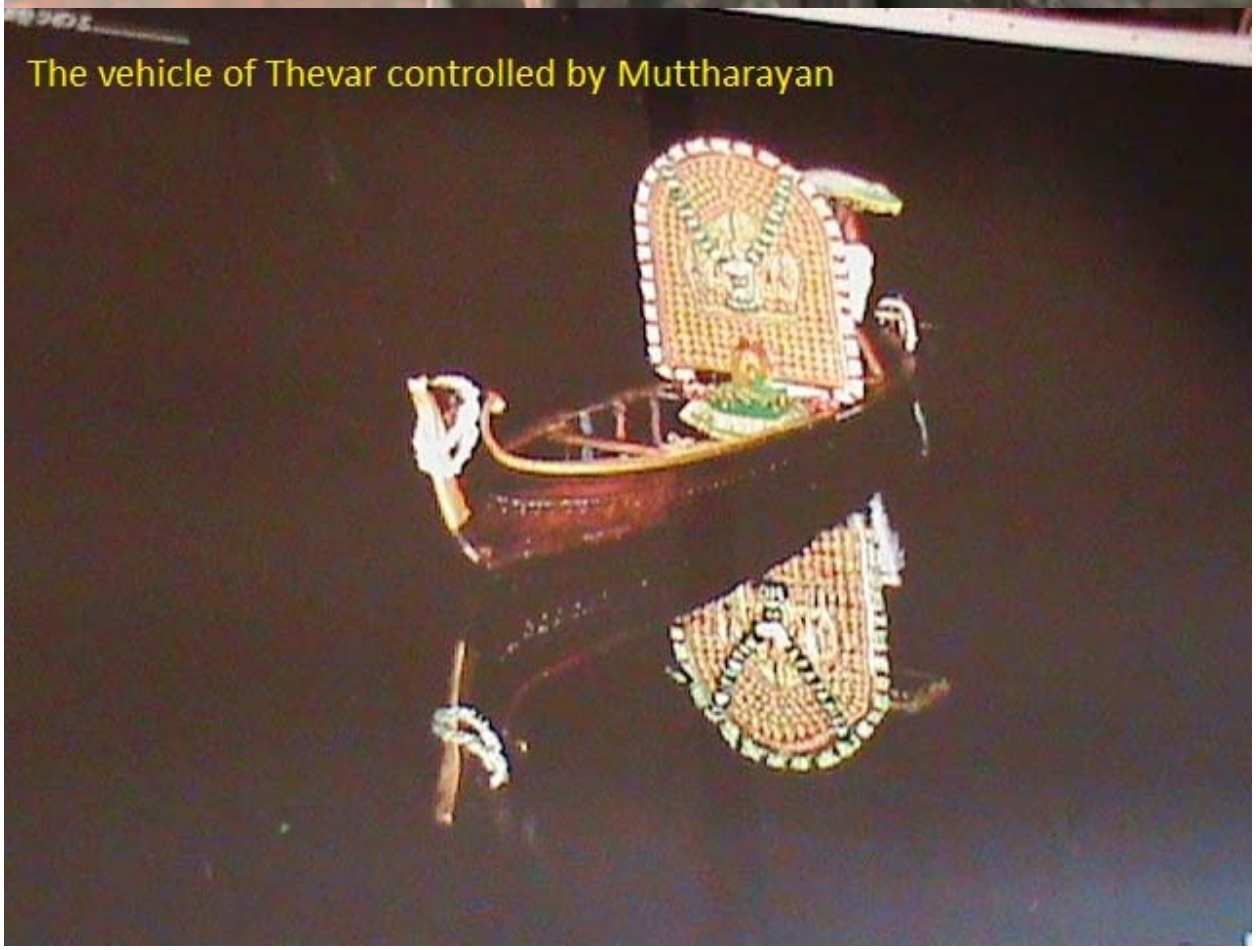
Asuras at head end of Vasuki
Oorakam
The haughty bhaava of each asura is shown with utmost care by the artist

Elephant and Mahout at Nankulam
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

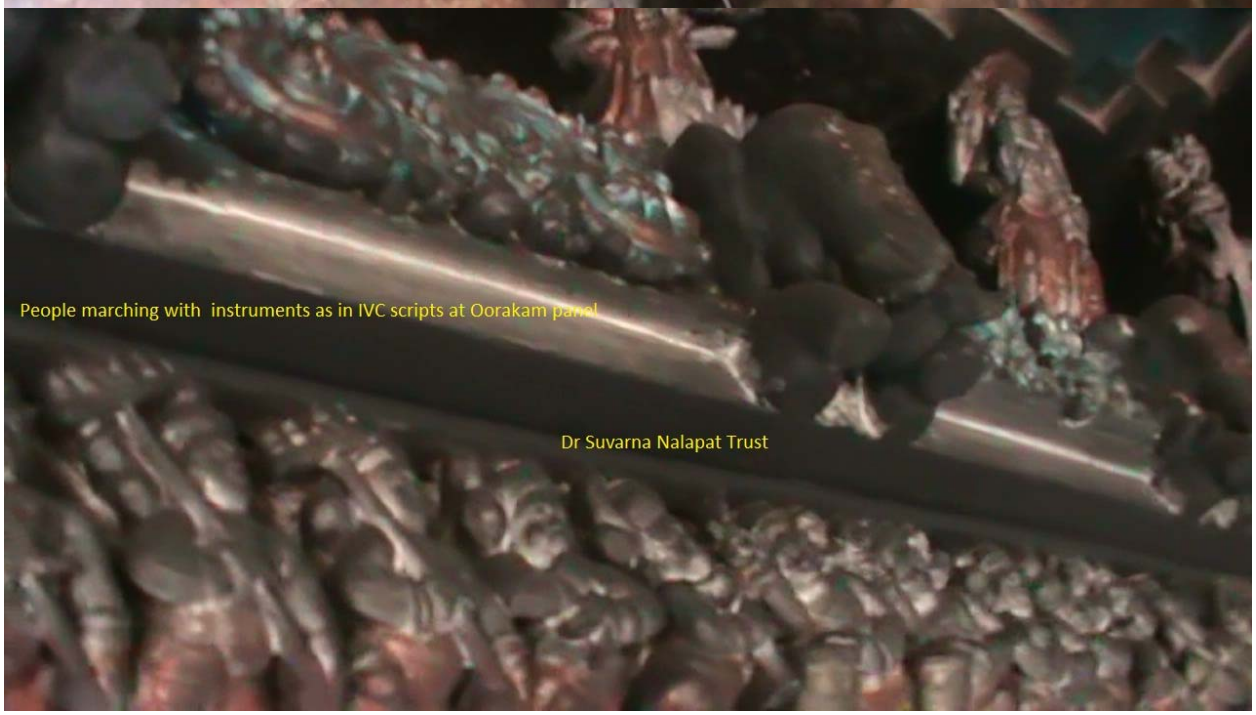


Thriprayar. A seafarer called Parathavar in old Sangam literature guards the sanctum sanctorum at Thriprayar

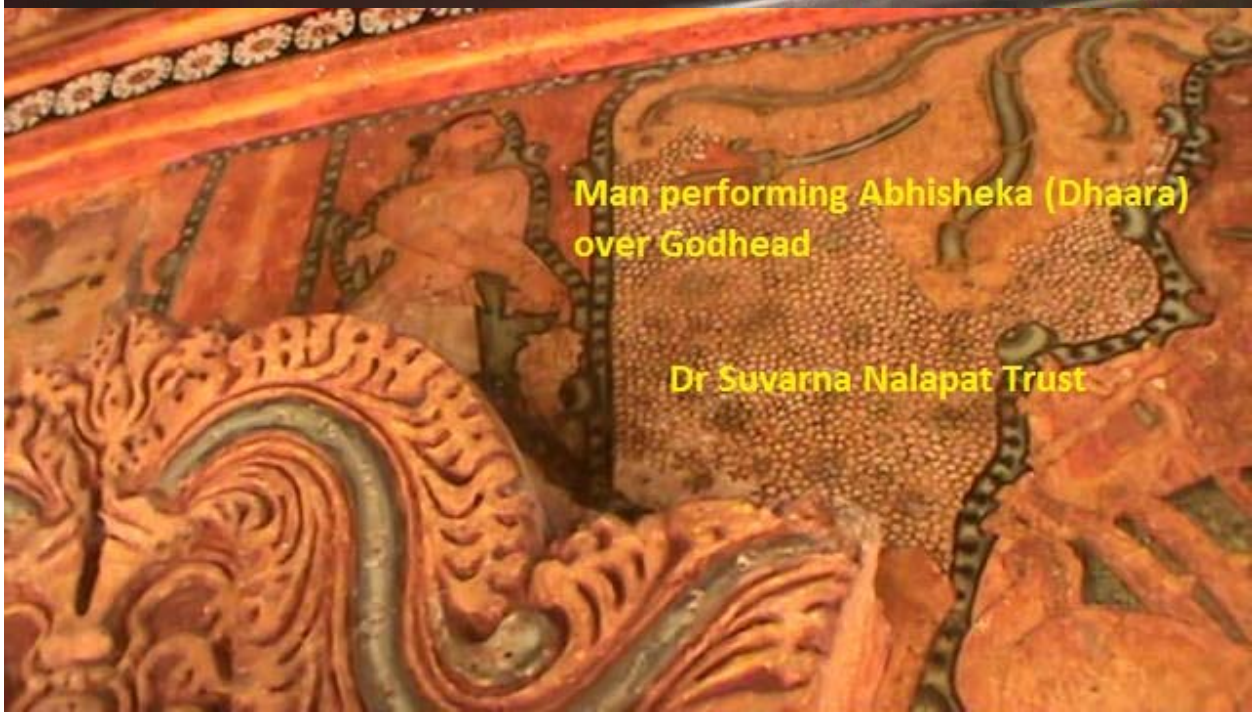
Perumpatalu Muttharayan of the Vallam of Thriprayar Thevar is the Valla(Uva)kkonaathiri

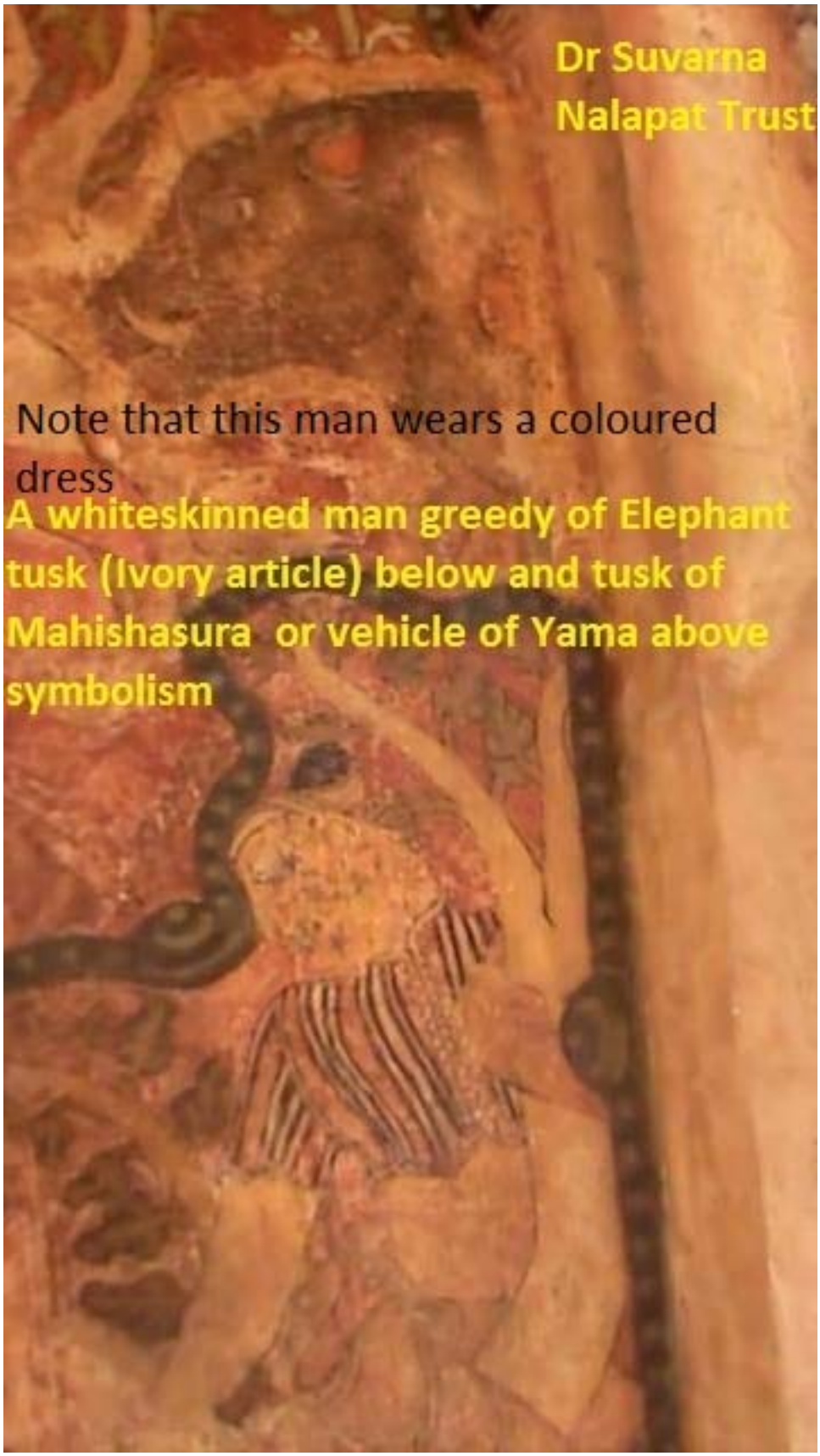


Mythical halfman half
animal Thriprayar


People marching with instruments as in IVC scripts at Oorakam panel
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Procession of musicians,dancers and people Oorakam Panel
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Man performing Abhisheka (Dhaara) over Godhead
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Dr Suvarna
Nalapat Trust
Note that this man wears a coloured dress
A whiteskinned man greedy of Elephant tusk (Ivory article) below and tusk of Mahishasura or vehicle of Yama above symbolism

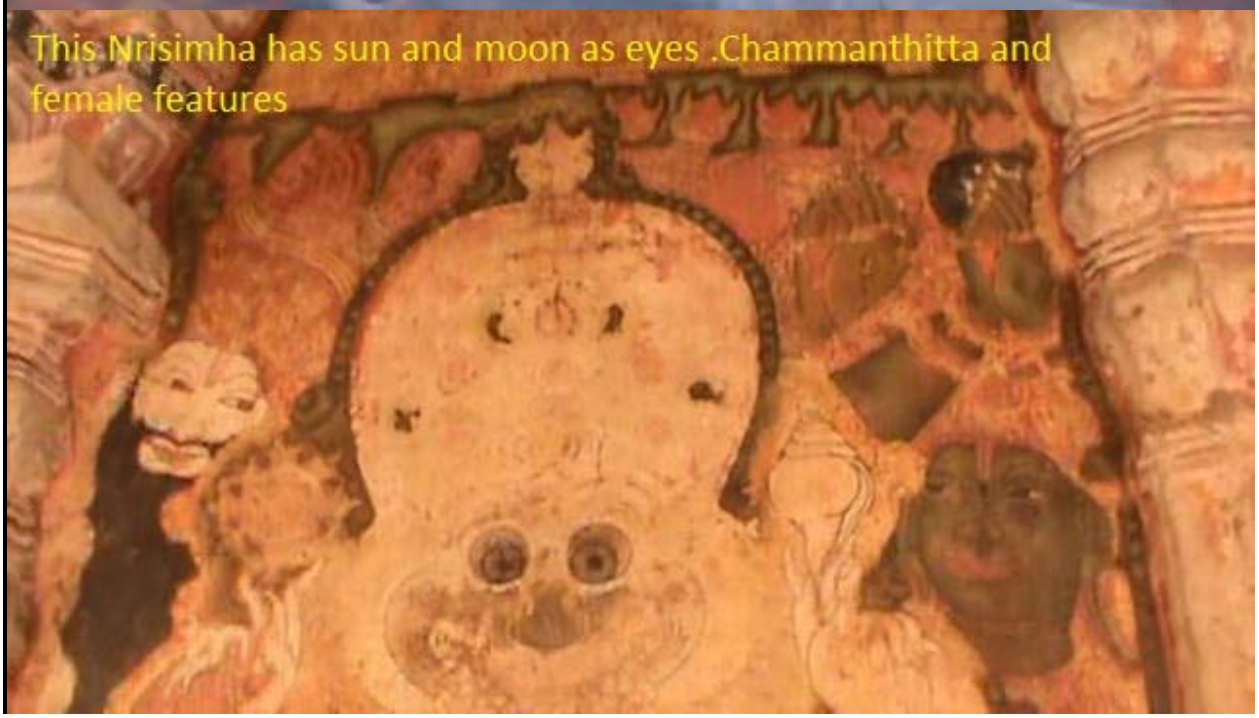
Same figure in Vatakkunnathan Rishabha Shrine ,compare with Chammandhitta where the women are doing Abhisheka/Ariyittuvazhcha on a seated figure with same crown as Indradwaja in Chammanthitta

Nrisimha in Thali Calicut has different bhaavaas depending on age of the King. The young prince in Brahmacharya, getting Yogapattaasana as Ayyappa is holding a deer and mazhu like Shiva ; the one who newly assumed position of Emperor in an aggressive mood to conquer ;a more matured and peaceful wise Vaanaprastha with no desire to conquer and who has performed Hiranyagarbha ;and finally the same emperor in old age (Vardhakya) with lean and wasted body .Comparing the four Ashrama of one's life and its moods/bhavas in iconography is a very rare feature.This type of Philosophical treatment of life stages is a very rare feature, not usually seen in Tamil nad or any other

part of India. Everywhere the artists and iconographists celebrate youth and adulthood with its beauty of body , but Kerala Iconographist also points out its fleeting nature and temporary nature and how age can change the physical beauty.But he also points out that when physical age is more, physical beauty decline and spiritual beauty increase as if in a seesaw of balancing act.

More mature and peaceful Vaanaprastha with wisdom

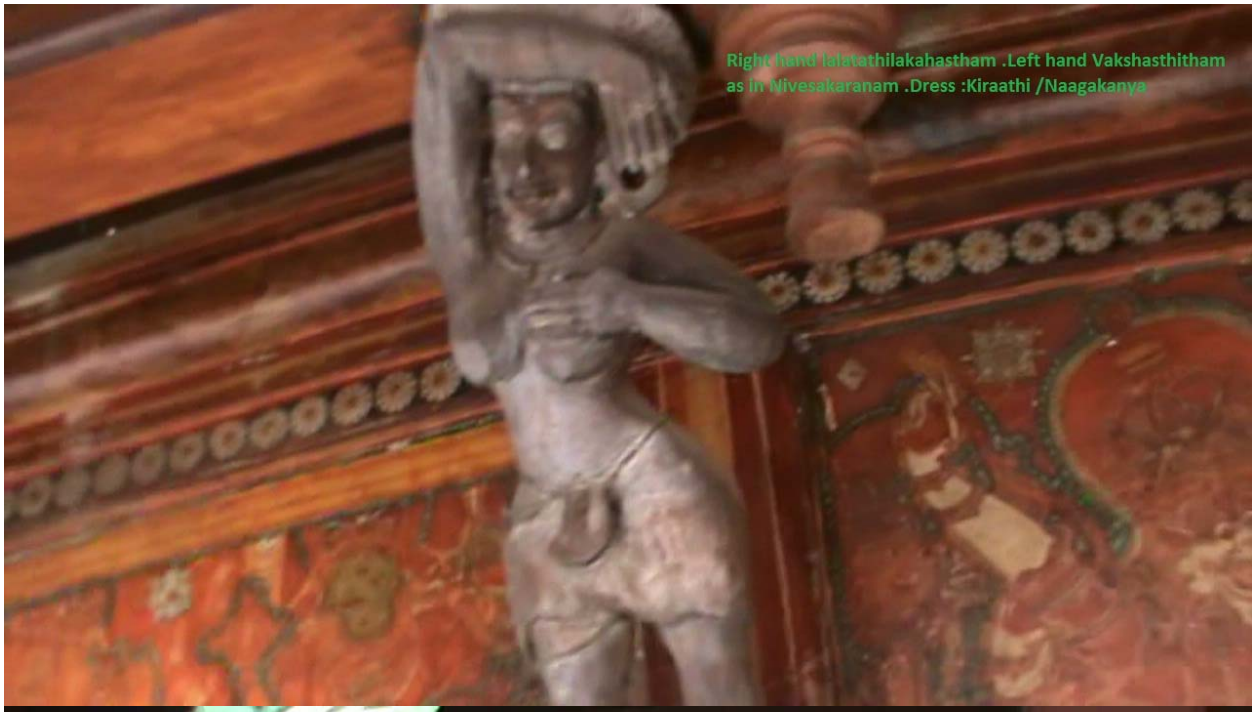
Vaardhakya of Narasimha



This Nrisimha has sun and moon as eyes .Chammanthitta and female features

Nrisimhi /female features

The two paada and the right hand are same as shown in Aakshiptha. But left hand instead of showing an abhayamudra, is kept on left knee just as the right hand is on right knee.
Kallambalam Vishnu
Wynad
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust



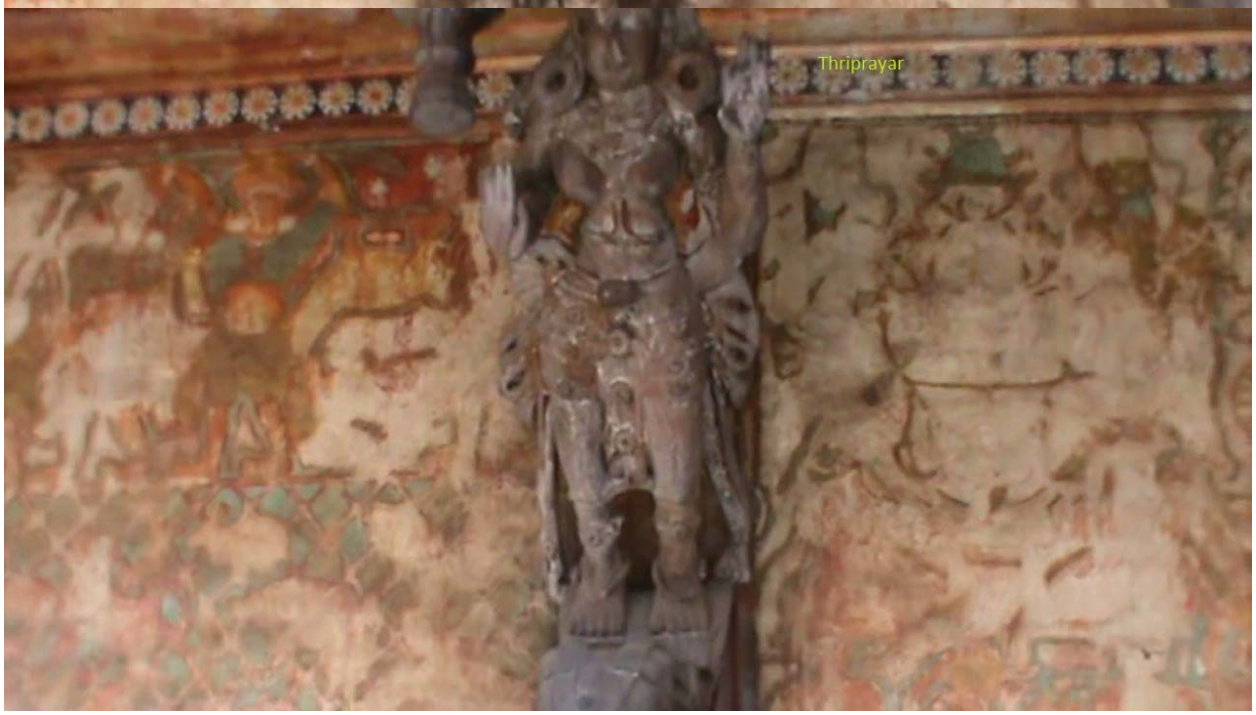
Right hand lalatathilakahastham .Left hand Vakshasthitham as in Nivesakaranam .Dress :Kiraathi /Naagakanya

Thriprayaar

Kiraathi with Thrisoolamudra (Mupporul Mudra)

Garuda at Vatakkunnaatha
Thrisoola
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Garuda is Pulla the God of Vaidya, brother of Naaga.
Here on his lap a Jalooka (leech) is seen denoting
healing power

Thriprayar


Thriprayar

Thriprayar

Thriprayar

Thriprayar

Thriprayar

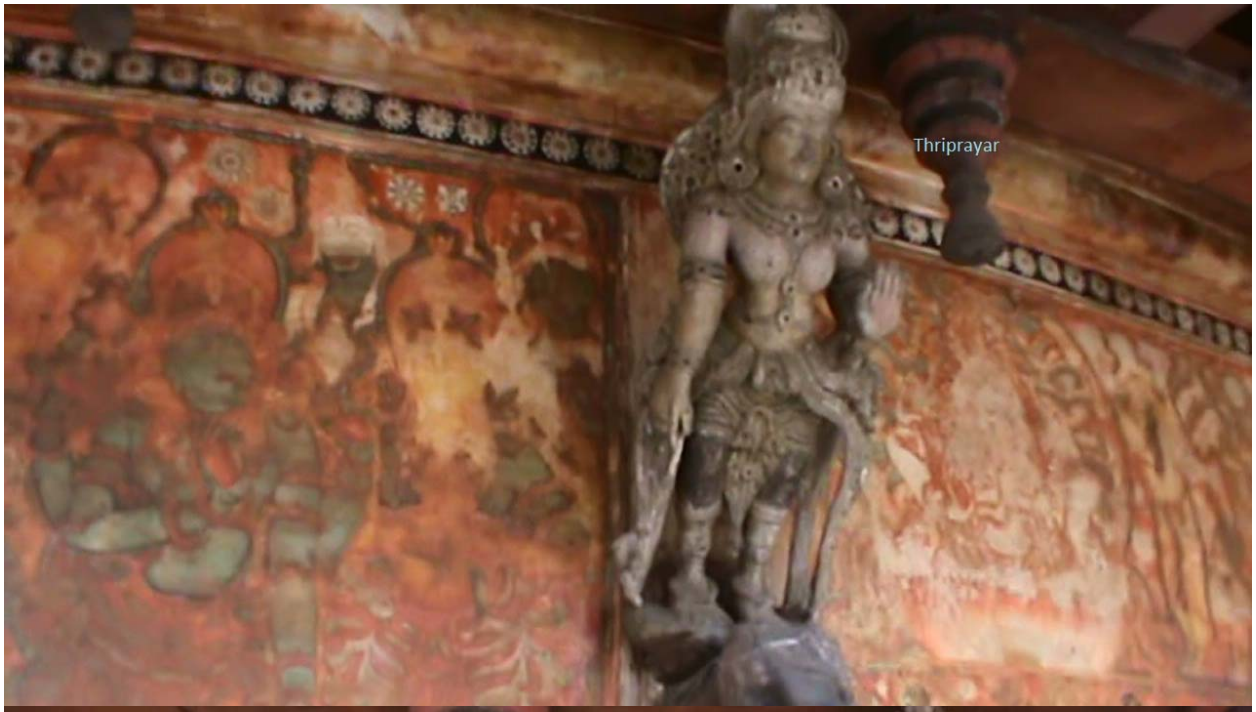
Thriprayar

Kumbhanritham (kalasam on head) In Andhra Devadasi do this .In Kerala also this was done in very ancient times.

Thriprayar

Thriprayar

Thriprayar


Thriprayar

Thriprayar

At Thriprayar a greek warrior,Alexander in karana pose
Alexander came to North India , but the silpi of South India knows his / or his warrior's dress thouroughly

Thriprayar

Vatakkunnathan

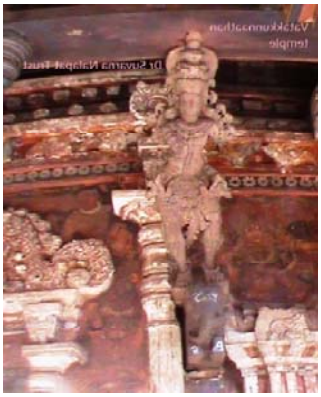
Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan
Anugrahamudra
Dr Suvarna Nalapat
Trust

Vatakkunnaathan temple

Vatakkunnaathan temple
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan temple



Dr Suvarna Nalapat
Trust
Vatakkunnaathan

Dr Suvarna Nalapat
Trust
Vatakkunnaathan

Dr Suvarna Nalapat
Vatakkunnaathan

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Musicians Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan

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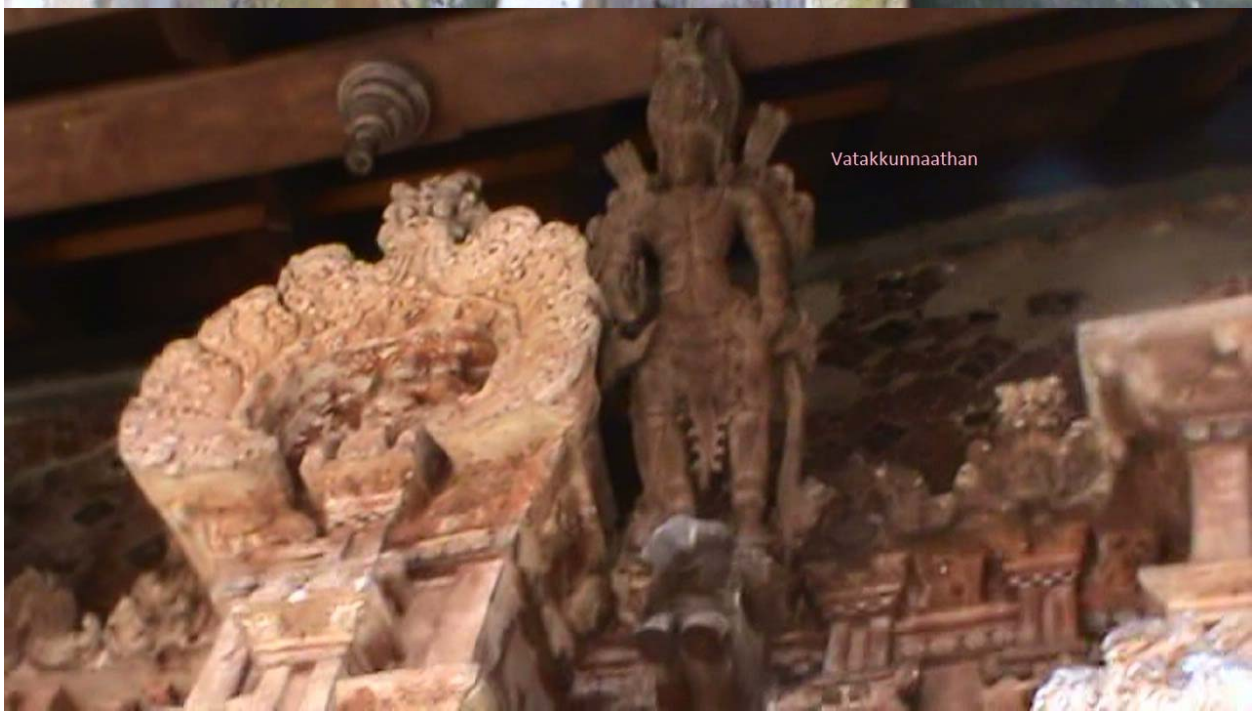
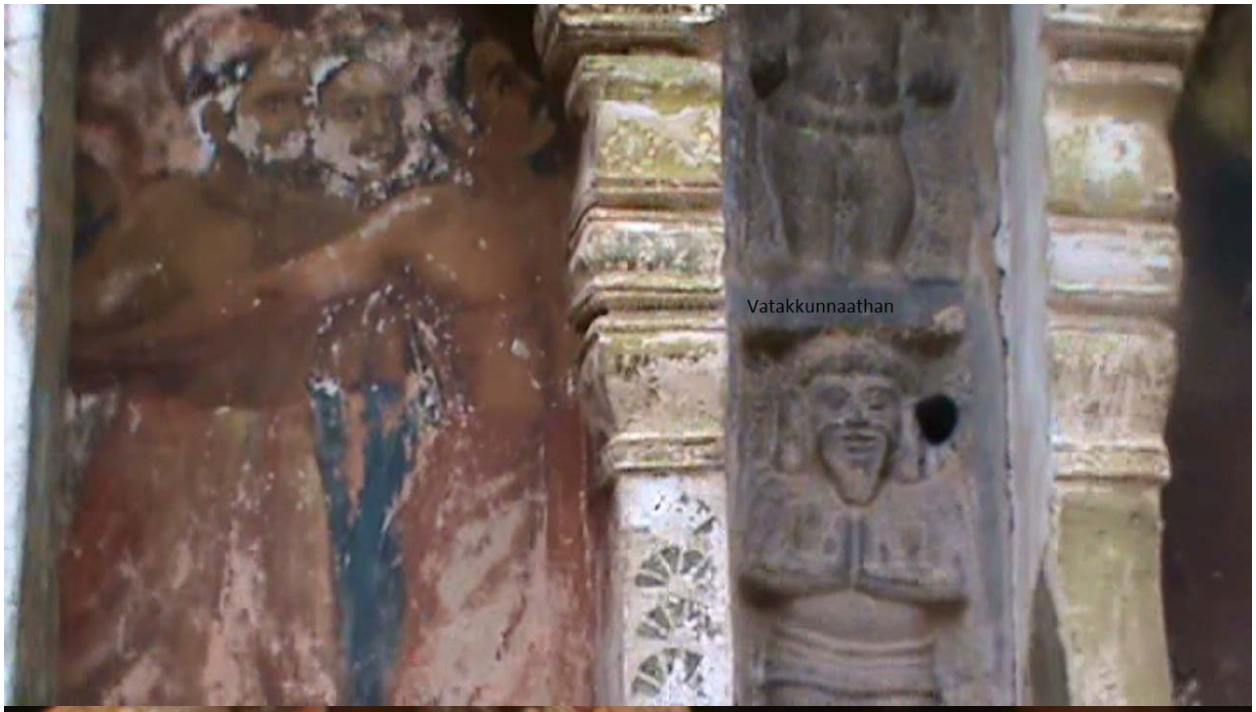

Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan

A karana at Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan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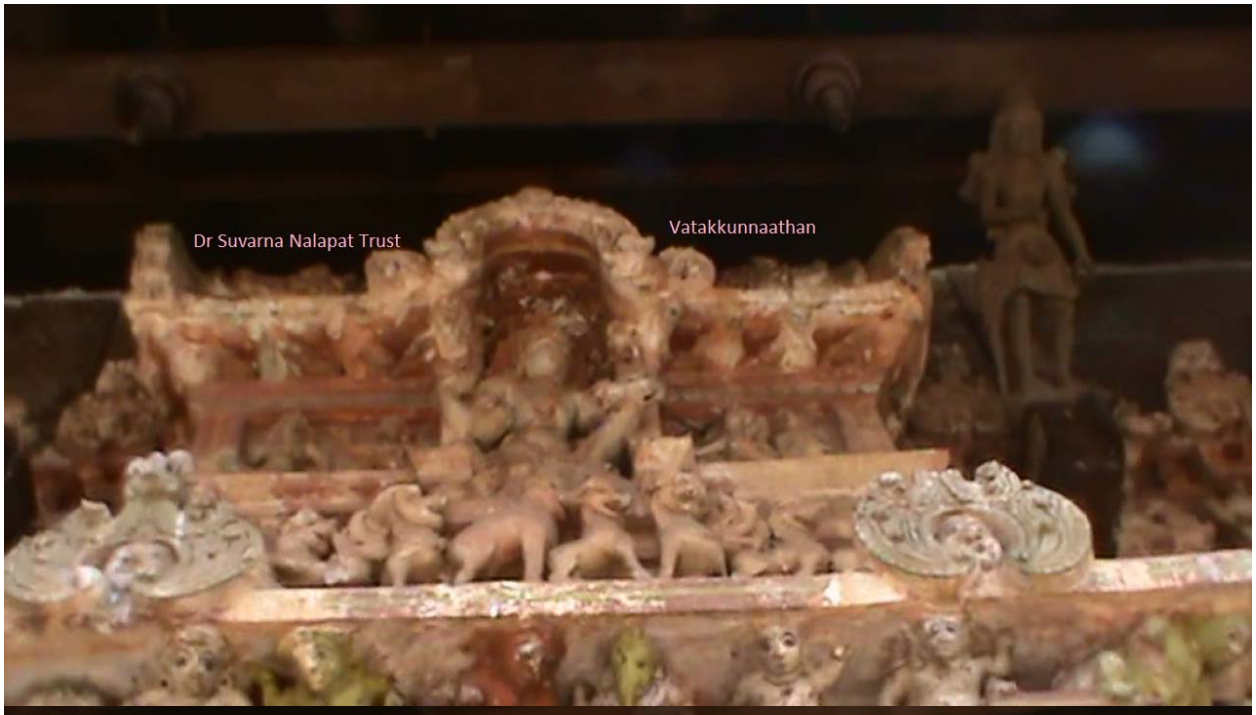
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan
Ganapathi is shown as the chief of the Yakshagana on this panel.
Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Figures carved in nitches
Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan

Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
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Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

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Vatakkunnaathan Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

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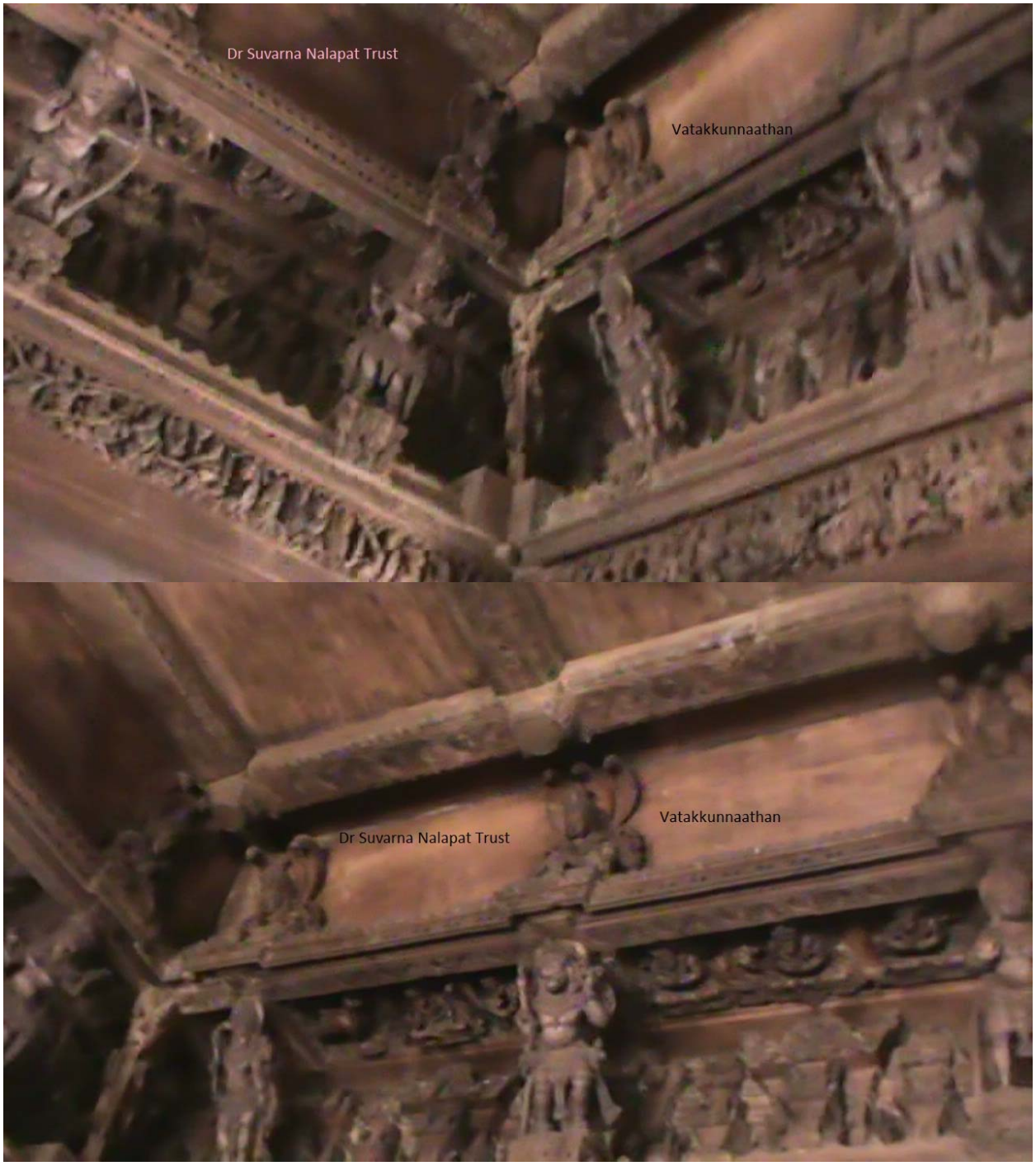
Vatakkunnaathan Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan.Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vasantholsavam/Chandrolsavam panel at Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan

Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust


Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Vatakkunnaathan
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Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
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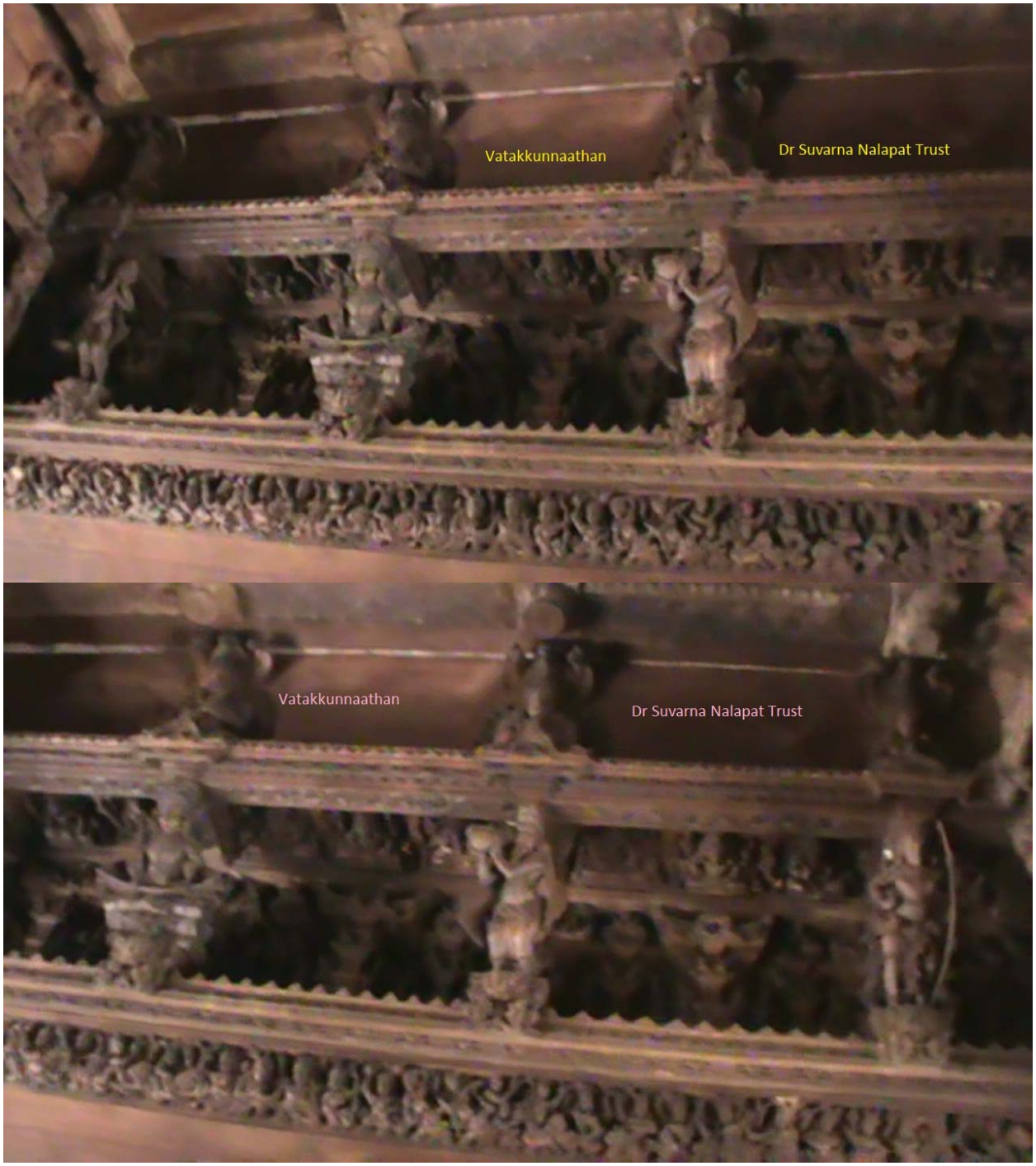
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Vatakkunnaathan


Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust
Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

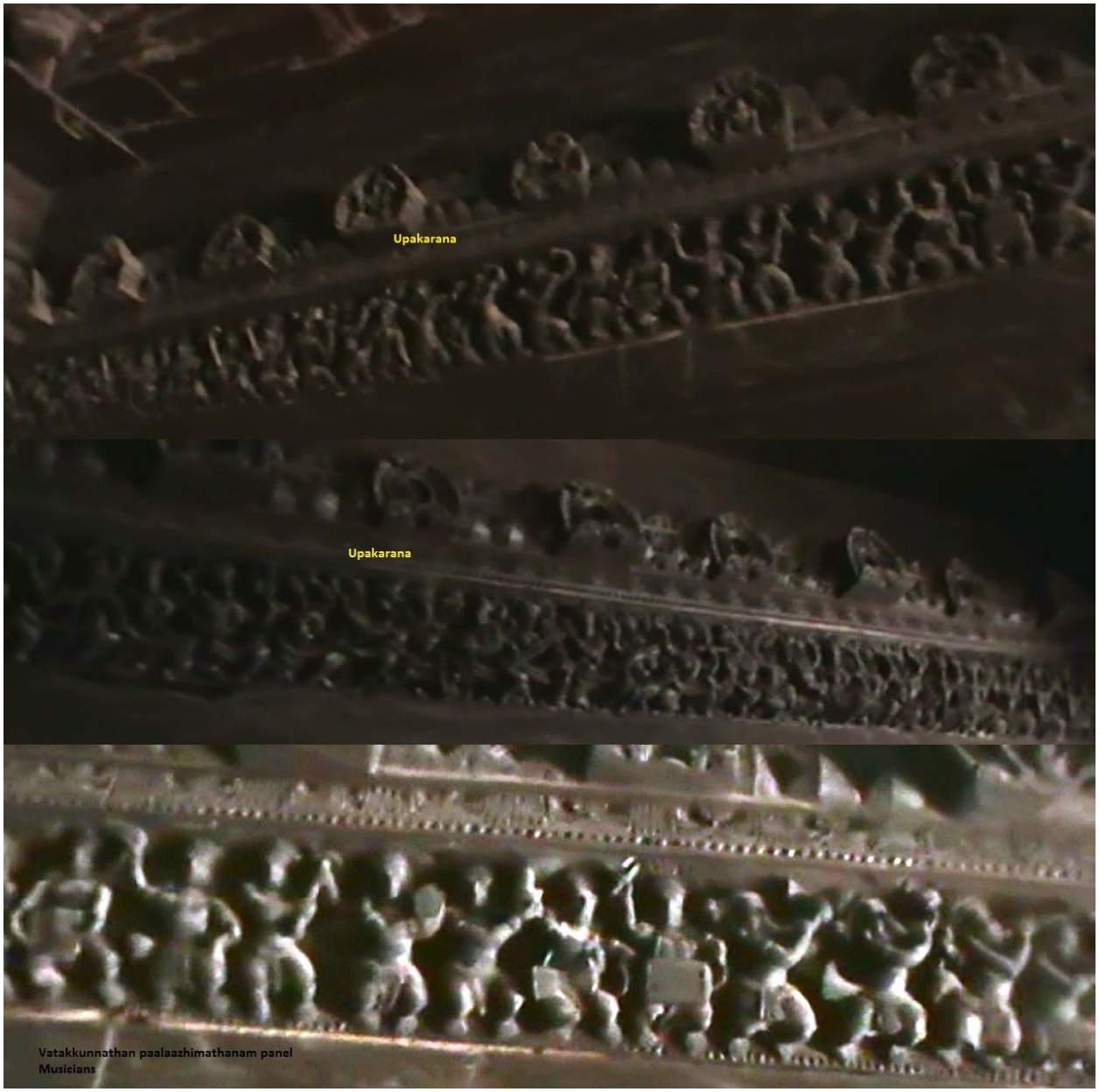
Vatakkunnaathan
Dr Suvarna Nalapat Trust

Vatakkunnaathan Gopuram

Upakarana

Upakarana

Dancers,musicians Vatakkunnaathan Gopuram


Upakarana
Upakarana
Vatakkunnathan paalaazhimathanam panel
Musicians

Musical instruments

Karmopakarana

Dancers musicians
sannatham
vaisakharechitham
Paalaazhimathanam
Paalaazhimathanam

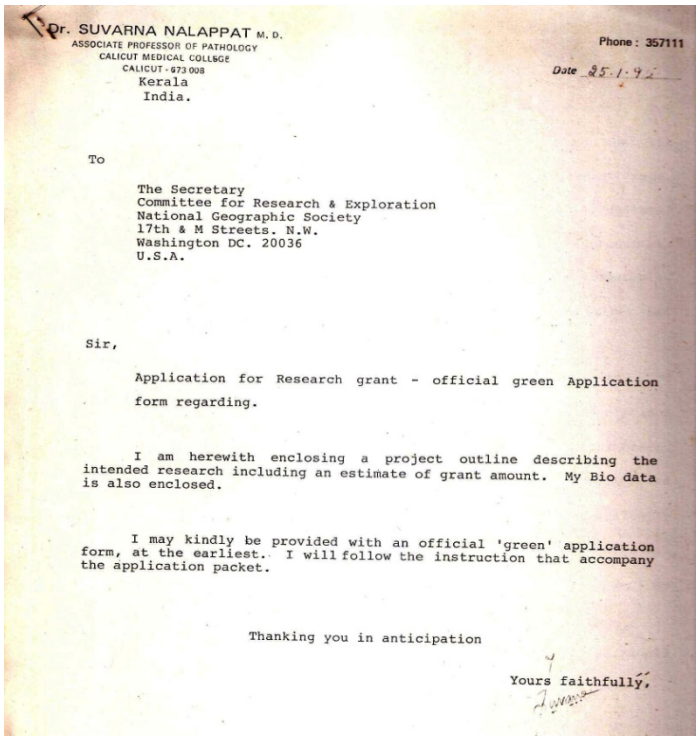
Gangavatharanam
Gangavatharanam

Nrithamaathruka made
by two Nrithakarana
Anjali above
Gangavatharanam Below
Gangavatharanam

Vatakkunnaathan

ANNEXURES :

1 .An application for National Geographic society help



Dr. SUVARNA NALAPPAT M. D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PATHOLOGY
CALICUT MEDICAL COLLEGE
CALICUT - 673 008
Kerala
India.

Phone : 357111

Date 25.1.92

To

The Secretary
Committee for Research & Exploration
National Geographic Society
17th & M Streets. N.W.
Washington DC. 20036
U.S.A.

Sir,

Application for Research grant - official green Application form regarding.

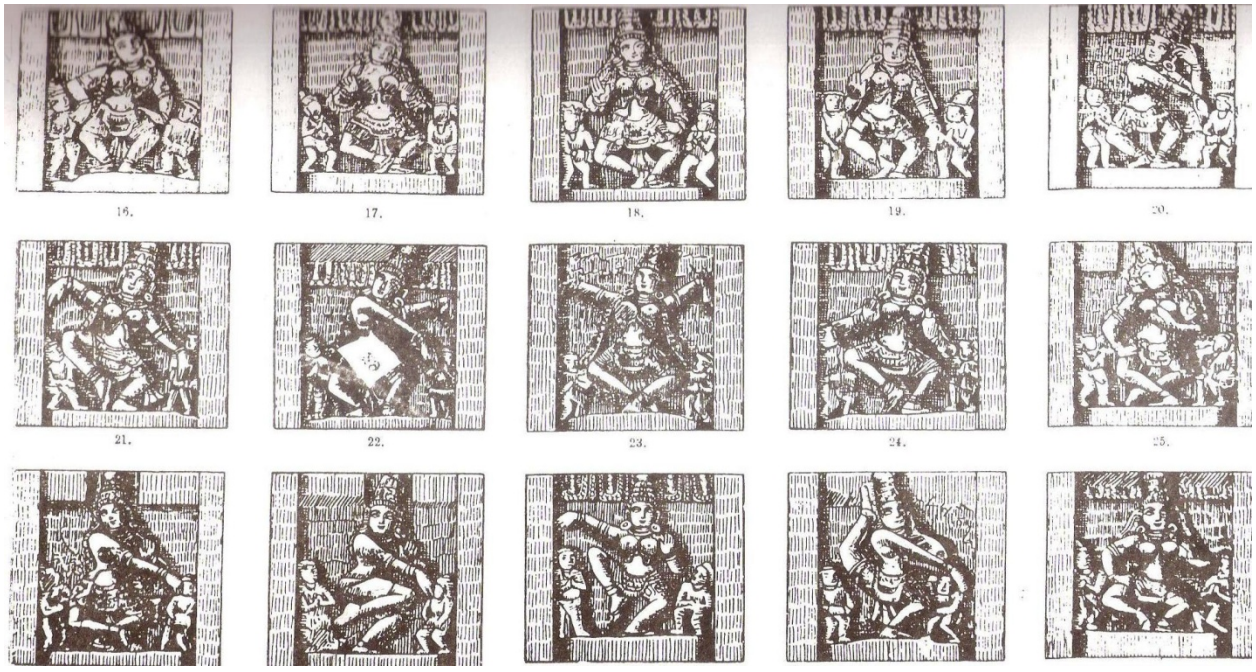
I am herewith enclosing a project outline describing the intended research including an estimate of grant amount. My Bio data is also enclosed.

I may kindly be provided with an official 'green' application form, at the earliest. I will follow the instruction that accompany the application packet.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully,

Annexure 2 (Plate from Thillai Nataraja by B Nataraja scanned for comparison)



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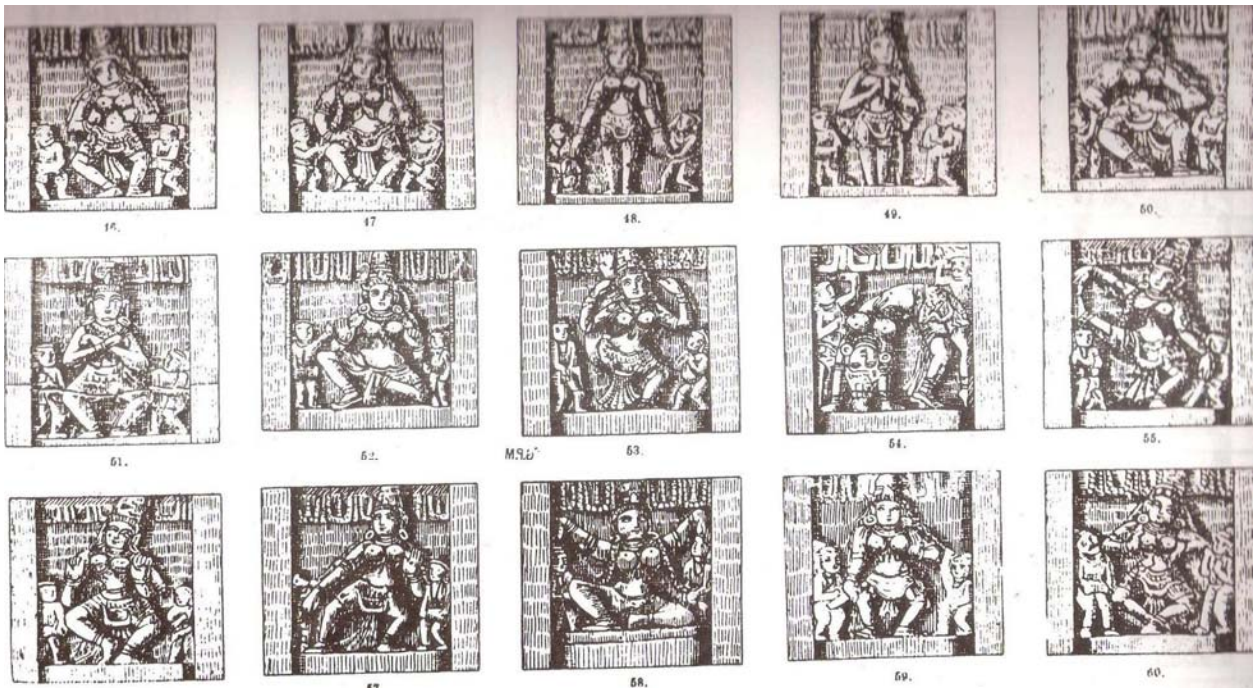
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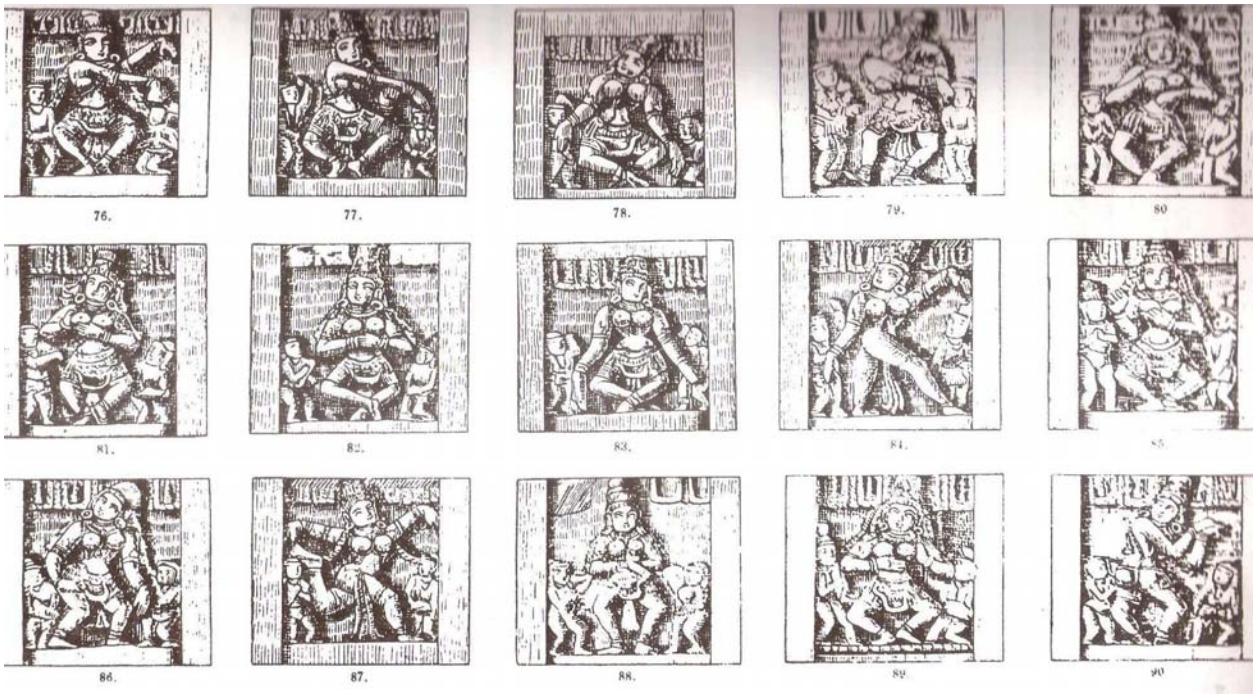
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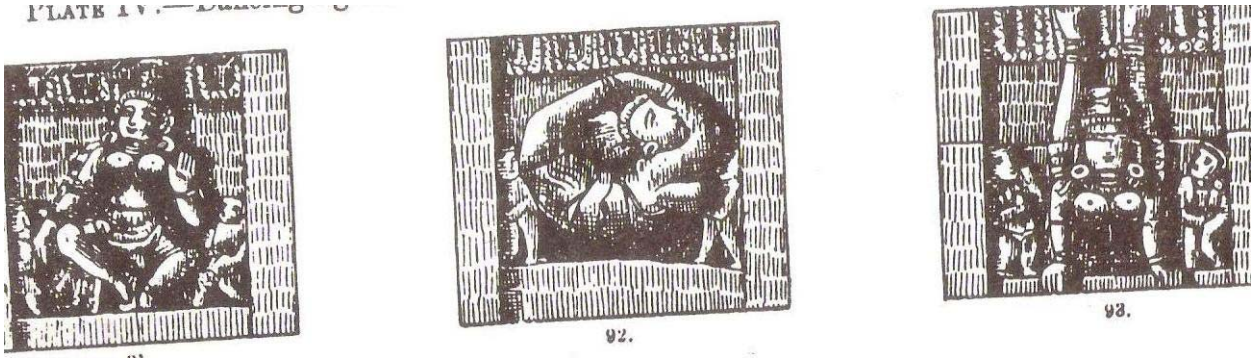
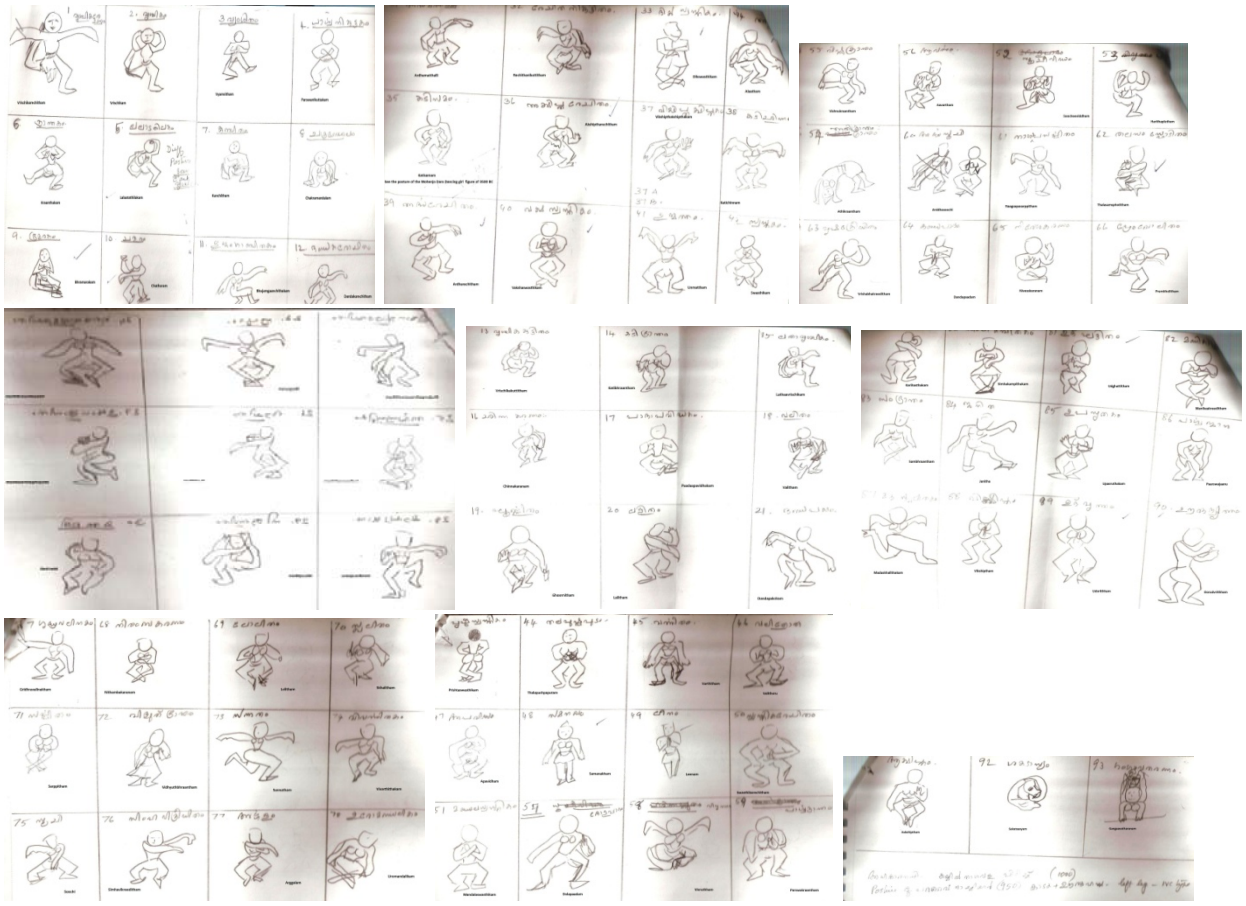
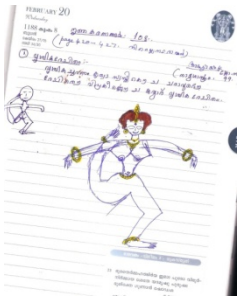
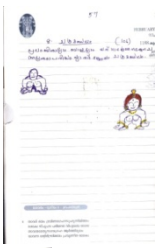


Annexure 3







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